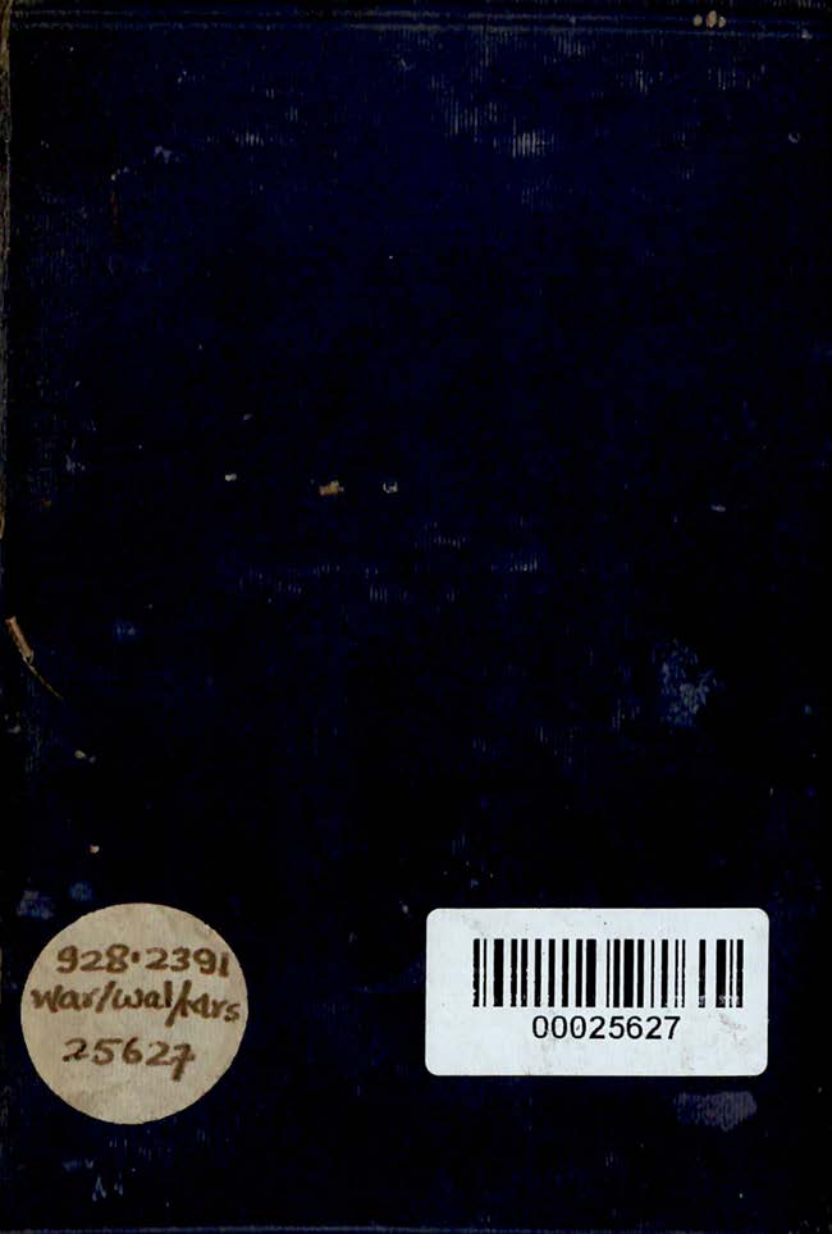
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MRS. HUMPHRY WARD

[*Photo by H. Walter Barnett.*

MRS. HUMPHRY WARD

HER WORK AND INFLUENCE

BY

J. STUART WALTERS

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MRS. HUMPHRY WARD

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

THROUGHOUT the whole of the middle and the latter part of the nineteenth century England was the scene of a great religious and intellectual revival; and this revival, introducing as it did many new ideas, led, not unnaturally, to much divergence of opinion, and this again led to controversy. The spirit, in fact, of controversy was in the air—it swept the country from north to south, from east to west, gathering in its embrace alike religion and science, and politics, and literature and art.

Perhaps the chief and certainly the most turbulent of these movements was that in connection with religion.

At that time, as now, the Established Church was split into three factitious divisions, the dissecting causes being practically the same as they remain to this day; but since the stir caused by Wesley at the end of the eighteenth century enthusiasm had been looked on askance—there was a desire for peace, and peace had been allowed

to degenerate into indifference on the part of the people, and into laxity on the part of the clergy.

The first sign of new life was a mild outbreak of Evangelicalism at Cambridge. Later came that outburst of Ritualism (or Tractarianism) at Oxford which had so marked an effect on the ethical development of the nation. This movement dates from a sermon on "National Apostasy" preached by Keble on July 14, 1833. Its causes were twofold: on the one hand, the spirit of Romanticism, turning men's minds to mediæval times; and, on the other, reaction from the great Liberal (or Rational) wave that swept away Catholic disabilities (in 1821 and 1822), which threatened the wealth of the Established Church, and brought German Rationalism over to England.

Something better was wanted to stem the tide—something more sturdy, more invigorating than the quiescent Anglicanism of the time. What all felt to be necessary was a positive dogma, based on a firm belief in a Church founded upon antiquity and free from error. But from this point onwards reformers failed to agree. "What," it was asked, "is meant by antiquity? Where draw the line?—at apostolic, patristic, or pre-Tridentine[1] times?" Freedom from error was of course essential, but again came the question

[1] Vide *Helbeck of Bannisdale* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1903), p. 387. The reference is, of course, to the œcumenical council held at Tridentum (Trent) in the years 1545–1563.

"What *is* error? Did it mean transubstantiation, or mariolatry, or merely papal infallibility?"

These were the questions that were debated, before a breathless Church, by that brilliant little band of Oxford scholars—Newman, the subtle Aristotelian; Pusey, whom Newman styled "the Great"; Keble, the gentle singer of the *Christian Year*; and Manning, the after hierarch who adorned the highest position the Roman Catholic Church in England can bestow. And such were the problems offered to a wondering world in ninety anonymous "Tracts for the Times" (whence Anglo-Catholics were called Tractarians), in which tracts was discerned a steady approximation to the faith of Rome.

This very approximation, being viewed with fear by a large proportion of the people, caused the pendulum of religious feeling once more to swing back—(How strange this must sound to any one who is unacquainted with the exceeding freedom of religious thought in England!) and gave strength once again to the Evangelical Movement.

This movement in 1845 took on a somewhat polemical aspect in the shape of the Evangelical Alliance, with the idea of "promoting unity among all denominations of professed Christians," and with the object of waging perpetual war against "Romanism and infidelity." This Alliance, perhaps on account of its fighting qualities, has shown extraordinary vitality; it has not only succeeded in keeping alive until to-day—which would of

itself have been a noteworthy achievement for what might have been merely a passing emotion—but it has taken root in other countries. Branches are to be found in the Colonies, in France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, and the United States, and a week of prayer takes place among the members throughout the world annually in January. Its motto is "Unum corpus sumus in Christo" and its stated object "to exhibit the unity of the one Church of God in doctrine, mutual recognition, and Christian co-operation for the advancement of evangelical truth throughout the world."

While this great fight between High and Low (with Broad occasionally intervening) was at its hottest, the conflicting parties felt their position assailed by a small but vigorous band of agnostic scientists led by Darwin and Huxley and Spencer. The first alarm was caused by Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859), followed by Huxley's *Man's Place in Nature* (1863).

But the real damage was done by the *Descent of Man* (1871), where, it will be remembered, Darwin sought to prove that man is descended from "a hairy quadruped with a tail, probably arboreal in its habits." The consternation among the Church factions—all of whom believed implicitly at that time, in the literal truth and inspiration of the Biblical story of the Creation and Fall of Man—may easily be imagined. Spencer followed with his *Principles of Psychology* (1872)

and *Principles of Sociology* (1877), wherein he extended Darwin's (and his own) theory of evolution beyond the department of biology and into the regions of the sister sciences. Huxley brought to bear the heavy guns of personal controversy, in which he successfully engaged Mr. Gladstone, Dr. Wace, and Bishop Magee—his own contributions to the debates being described at the time as "fine exhibitions of vigorous argument and trenchant language."

The natural and inevitable effect of this flank attack was first to draw off the Church antagonists, then to bring them to some extent together, that they might fight side by side against the common enemy.

When the fighting force of both these movements was somewhat spent, the times were ripe for a larger and simpler creed, embracing philosophies of East and West, and not out of sympathy with Science. The need, as so often happens, produced the men, and Frederick Denison Maurice, Matthew Arnold, and Charles Kingsley gave to the thinking world those wonderful ethical studies which created almost a sensation at the time, but which we now recognise as the natural evolution of theological and philosophical thought. These were received by sectarians with mingled horror, fear and anguish—the Nonconformists being especially virulent in their abuse.

The Church—perhaps because led by more cultured men—said less that was abusive, but a

great section, the disciples of Tractarianism, was driven by blind fear into the ranks of the Ritualists, and thence not a few by a relentless logic into the Roman Catholic Faith.

Throughout the whole distressful period the Broad Church, by reason of its open mind, and a certain detached attitude, maintained the greatest poise—meeting the new views in Science, as it were, half-way.

It is perhaps only right to say that the Science of the latter middle of the nineteenth century, and even on towards the end of the century, was extremely materialistic. People feared, they knew not what. Morals formerly were thought to be based on Religion, and if the foundations of Religion went, where, it was asked, would be the morality of the country ?

Protestantism, in urging the private right of Conscience—the right of the individual to think for himself—has within it elements which must eventually destroy it, so far as dogmatic and miraculous belief is concerned. The Light of Science is continually explaining old beliefs in new ways, till they become unrecognisable. Thus many of the orthodox are not scared and some are attracted by the new thought. But, as Cotter Morrison says :—

. . . "Mere rationalism, however cogent to some minds, often remains powerless on others, and those frequently possessing the best qualities of intellect and character. The deepest change

which this age has seen in reference to men's attitude towards the current theology, has taken place, not in the region of the understanding, but in that of the heart. It is not so much that the Bible, with its miracles and legends, is felt to be untrue and incredible by the trained reason; a great number of theological dogmas are felt to be morally repulsive and horrible, by the more humane conscience of modern times. This change of sentiment is so great and far-reaching, that there is no wonder that its import is imperfectly seized, or even wholly missed by those whom the accidents of education and surroundings have preserved from its influence. It is a change not less momentous than that which placed the Christian converts of the Roman period in a position of passionate hostility to the immoralities and indecencies of decaying polytheism. Even divines are becoming aware that the eternity of hell-torment is a doctrine of waning efficacy, on which it is easy to insist too much. Some are discovering that it lacks Scriptural authority, and beseech us not to believe that anything so dreadful is delivered in the Word of God. The minimising of irksome tenets is a frequent resource and an unfailing symptom of decaying faiths. Julian and his pagan sophists essayed to spiritualise offensive Greek myths. There is no ground for doubting the *bona fides* of such attempts, but they rarely succeed." [1]

[1] *The Service of Man* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1888), pp. 25, 26.

Amidst all these shifting sands of old-time belief, the Church of Rome seemed to stand, as it claimed, firmly built upon a rock—so, at least, it appeared to many in England whose tone of mind was ritualistic and conservative.

Contemporaneous with all this religious and anti-religious ferment were certain social movements which may briefly be noted as immediately antecedent to, and to some extent provocative of, the publication of *Marcella* and *Sir George Tressady*.

The period 1865–1900 has been called the Period of Collectivism, though it overlaps for some years the previous reign of Benthamism and Individualism.

The trend and tendency of Benthamite legislation had been :—

(*a*) *The transference of political power to the middle classes*, as marked by the Parliamentary Reform Act of 1832 and the Municipal Reform Act of 1836.

(*b*) *Towards Humanitarianism*, as evidenced by the mitigation of criminal law (whipping of women abolished, 1820; the pillory, 1816; hanging in chains, 1834), the prohibition of cruelty to animals (bull-baiting and cock-fighting abolished, 1833 and 1835; prohibition of use of dogs for draught, 1854), and the emancipation of slaves, 1833.

(*c*) *The Extension of Individual Liberty*, as shown by several Acts giving greater freedom of contract, such as the Combination Acts of 1824 and 1825, and the Companies Acts of 1856 and 1862.

At this time also was given greater freedom in dealing with property in land by means of such Acts as the Inheritance Act of 1833, and the Real Property Act of 1845.

Probably personal freedom was never at so great a height as in England between the years 1850 and 1870.

The reformers whose exertions ushered in this state of things, whether they were thinkers such as Bentham, Grote and Mill, or politicians like Lord John Russell and Earl Grey, all relied very largely on the parliamentary suffrage as a safeguard of freedom. They perceived that the suffrage, so far as it had been possessed by the people, had been used as such a safeguard in the past; but they did not perceive how the suffrage might be used to create a new kind of class supremacy. And yet these reformers were themselves the men who dwelt upon the danger of class supremacy, in the hands of every class except one. They were so taken up with resisting the tyranny of kings and oligarchies that it never occurred to the earlier leaders among them to consider what would happen when numerical majorities became supreme. They seemed to have drawn the conclusion that, because Acts of State to which they objected had usually been the work of a minority, therefore every minority was dangerous, but every majority was to be trusted. They did not state the position quite so crudely, and, indeed, most of them never stated it at all,

but simply took it for granted. John Stuart Mill was probably the first to perceive the danger of placing all political power in the hands of a single class, although that class was not a minority, but a majority. His elaborate advocacy of the representation of minorities was partly the result of this perception, though no doubt his love of abstract justice would have prompted the advocacy, even if no danger had threatened. Be that as it may, Mill seems to have almost wholly left out of account the inveterate British dislike for symmetrical institutions and what is called doctrinairism. He does, in a faint kind of way, admit that the plan he advocated would have to overcome a certain amount of prejudice. Had he lived a dozen years longer (and he was only sixty-seven years of age when he died), he would have seen the little instalment of minority representation which was instituted in his own time done away with, and the whole subject of proportional representation ridiculed as a mere crotchet.

Dicey, who has made a close study of this period, very pointedly remarks:—

"Nor is it irrelevant to note that the more closely the renovation of English institutions under the influence of Bentham is studied, the more remarkably does it illustrate the influence of public opinion upon law. Nothing is effected by violence; every change takes place, and every change is delayed or arrested by the influence, as it may seem the irresistible influence, of an unseen

power. The efforts of obstructionists or reactionists come to nothing, the Toryism of Eldon, the military rigidity of Wellington, the intelligent conservatism of Peel, and at a later period the far less intelligent conservatism of Palmerston, all appear . . . not in reality to delay for more than periods which are mere moments in the life of nations, the progress of change. On the other hand, the violence of democrats or the fervour of enthusiasts achieves little in hurrying on innovation. In the eighteenth century a duke was ready to recommend universal suffrage. It was demanded by the Chartists, who between 1830 and 1848 seemed destined to carry parliamentary reform to its logical conclusion.

"Although England is far more democratic than in the middle of the nineteenth century, the electors, who could easily obtain any change that they eagerly desired, acquiesce in arrangements far less democratic than even unqualified household suffrage; and it is arguable . . . that the reforms of the last sixty years have considerably increased the popularity of the Crown, the Peerage, and the Church." [1]

[1] *Law and Opinion in England* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1905), pp. 208, 209.

When using these words the Vinerian Professor of English Law at the University of Oxford was addressing the students of the Harvard Law School in 1898: it would be interesting to know how he would view the effect of recent legislation (Parliament Act, 1911), on the peerage and their legislative rights.

The period of Benthamism was followed by the period of Collectivism. The explanation of this change is to be found not in the advance of democracy, as might perhaps have been expected, but rather in the growth of Tory philanthropy, as marked more especially by the era of Factory Legislation which was started by Oastler's letters and writings in 1830. His *Slavery in Yorkshire*, coming just on top of the movement for the emancipation of the negroes, and telling of the horrors of child-slavery, not in the West Indies, but in the heart of England, aroused a tremendous wave of indignation, and on the crest of that wave the various ameliorative Factory Acts were carried.

But a far greater Tory philanthropist of that time was Lord Shaftesbury, who has been called the "complete beau-ideal of aristocracy." In reality he was neither a politician nor a theologian, but a religious humanitarian who devoted his life to philanthropic labours. His name will always remain intimately connected with the Ten Hours Act of 1850, and though he hated Socialism on the one hand, he had no love for the mill-owners and manufacturers on the other. And thus it came about that the artisans were willing to be led by him, for he shared their faith in the benefits to be derived from extending the authority of the State. This readiness on the part of the workers to follow a leader who was not of their own class is explained by the failure of Chartism in 1848. From that time onwards they either gave up all interest in

public affairs, or devoted their efforts to movements of the social rather than of the political order, such as trades-unionism. And so a faith in the benefit to be derived from State intervention became established, and the various trades-unions began that series of collective bargains which has gained for them their present recognised position in the country and their power in Parliament.

Politically, the next forward move was the passing of the Reform Bill of 1867. This Act, by taking the household as the basis of the franchise, endeavoured to follow out the principle that each head of a family should possess a vote. This gave us in place of the mediæval *commune* the smaller commune or household or family.

But there were other qualifications attached to this vote, and these gradually grew till it could scarcely be said that we had a *bona-fide* household franchise at all. And so from the family we were gradually driven more and more to the idea of individual as the unit of political life.

In 1872 an important step was taken in protecting electoral rights by means of the Ballot Act.

Many, perhaps, were inclined to sympathise with Mill in his objection to this Act on the grounds that it would be a higher standard of things if a man were to exercise his franchise openly as a sacred trust of which he was not ashamed. But there were (and there still are) so many difficulties to be overcome, and it was (and is) found in practice that men are much more free in exercising

their right to vote when they are protected by the secrecy of the ballot.

In the year of the appearance of *Robert Elsmere* there was passed the County Council Act (1888)—an Act democratic enough in theory, but found to be less so in working. This Act took the government of the counties out of the hands of the Justices of the Peace and placed it in the hands of popularly elected representatives; but as a matter of fact it was found in working that the people very often elected Justices of the Peace to represent them, and so no great change resulted.

The religious and political factors in the formation and re-formation of the ethical standards of this period have been noted at some length, but this review would be incomplete without some mention of a third force which exercised a powerful influence on both the other forces, namely, Æstheticism. This being a term that has suffered some abuse, may be defined as the philosophy of the beautiful, in nature, in art, and in literature. With this movement the names of Ruskin, Wordsworth, Rossetti, and William Morris are immemorably connected, and the greatest of these by reason of his dominant personality, the vigour of his writings, his passionate advocacy of certain reforms, and his utter devotion to the service of his country, is Ruskin. His thoughts on God, on Nature, on the good and the beautiful, on human ideals, on duty, on happiness, on the ends and aims of society have indeed been expressed by others,

but by none with so much clearness and spontaneity, and by none have these ideals been so closely interwoven with the daily needs of a workaday world.

The other apostles of Æstheticism, too, each in his own way, preached the gospel of the Ideal—seeking to turn men's minds upward and away from the materialistic and somewhat sordid motives of Benthamism and the like—away from the gloomy contentiousness of religious controversy, towards the Beautiful.

All three movements, however, are closely intermingled, for the religious movement has its effect on politics—helping forward its steadily growing humanitarian tendency; and the æsthetic movement on religion—attracting waverers from the side of Evangelicalism by calling attention to the beauty (of the externals at any rate) in the Ritualistic services.

Æstheticism, moreover, had its influence on political opinion, for once men had come to realise the beautiful as a thing essential and desirable, poverty in all its ugly shapes and forms became intolerable, and thus strength and impetus were given to that flood of sentiment which eventually produced the ameliorative legislation that has been already noted.

Again, it was Æstheticism that taught us to beautify our homes, both externally and internally, and called our attention to the subtle soothing influence of half-tones in colour. It even had an

effect on dress, and led, under the influence mainly of William Morris, to the production of those delightful fabrics which we now classify under the generic term " Liberty goods."

Of the various movements—religious, political and artistic—the last was, from a literary point of view, by far the most interesting and important. For while religion gave much that is valuable to theology, it produced little of general interest, if we except perhaps Newman's *Apologia*.

The political thought of the period produced a better crop of work, for it was fortunate enough to have as its chief literary representative John Stuart Mill—hence the immortal work on *Liberty* (1859), and that great dissertation on capital, wages, rent, profit, international values, currency, etc., entitled *Principles of Political Economy* (1842).[1]

But Art did better still ; for, using the term so as to include pure Literature, which is but a form of Art, we are confronted with a perfect phalanx of genius and talent. It is doubtful, in fact, if any period in our history can compare from a literary point of view with that which is known as mid-Victorian.

For to this period belong—in addition to the names already quoted—Froude, the historian ; Thackeray, Dickens and George Eliot, novelists ; Browning, Swinburne and Tennyson, poets ; with

[1] Mill's name will always be remembered as one of the earliest male advocates of Woman Suffrage.

Matthew Arnold in his versatility, touching all three phases of thought, namely: Art, as a poet (*Poems*, 1853, and *New Poems*, 1867); Politics, as a philosopher (*Culture and Anarchy*, 1869); and Religion, as a critic (*Literature and Dogma*, 1872).

And if one turn for a brief glance towards pure Art as expressed in painting and sculpture, again one is struck by the wealth of talent belonging to this period. Watts, Leighton and Millais were perhaps the greatest, but they were closely followed by a host of others, several of whom, like Herkomer, have survived the period and still remain to remind us of the splendour of the recent past.

CHAPTER II

EARLY IMPRESSIONS AND LATER IDEALS

THERE are few literary personalities, if indeed there be any, that have made a deeper impression on the psychosis of our own times than that of Mary Augusta, the eldest daughter of Thomas Arnold, and granddaughter of the great schoolmaster "Arnold of Rugby." Born in 1851, she married, at the age of twenty-one, Thomas Humphry Ward, Fellow and Tutor of Brasenose College, Oxford, author and journalist.

Her father was himself a man of no mean literary ability. His was a life of much interest to students of his daughter's work—a life full of movement and mental activity, involving some unrest. Born at Laleham in 1823, he was educated under James Prince Lee at Rugby—his father being headmaster. His holidays were spent at Fox How in Westmoreland among that glorious mountain scenery which his daughter learned to love and which she has described so exquisitely in *Robert Elsmere*. For a time he held the post of inspector of schools in Tasmania, but his mind was troubled

with religious difficulties and in 1856 he was received into the Roman Catholic Church.

This step led to some ill-feeling in the Colony, and we next hear of him sailing for England with his wife and three children—the eldest of whom was Mary Augusta—"in a small barque of 400 tons." [1]

The journey took three months and the "vast expanse of ocean" does not appear to have left a favourable impression on the young girl, for nowhere in her work do we find the sea referred to with anything approaching enthusiasm.

A few months after landing, Arnold accepted a post under Newman in Dublin. Here he wrote his *Manual of English Literature.*

In 1856, probably under the influence of Döllinger, he became alienated from his chief and left the Church of Rome. He then built himself a house (now known as Wycliffe Hall) in Oxford, and there he took pupils. Here we have the key to Mrs. Ward's intimate knowledge of Oxford life. But his roving was not yet over. In 1882 he was appointed professor of English Language and Literature in the University College of Dublin. Henceforth he resided in Ireland, making pilgrimages therefrom to the shrines of saints and to Rome; which fact lends colour to the statement that has been made to the effect that he rejoined the Roman Church. In 1900 he brought out

[1] Vide *Dictionary of National Biography* (Supplement, vol. i.).

an autobiographical volume entitled *Passages in Wandering Life*, written in an agreeable style but with some bitterness, for, as he himself said, the greater part of his life had been "restless and unprofitable." The portrait prefixed to his *Passages* shows a marked resemblance to his elder and more famous brother, Matthew.

His religious vacillations probably account for the fact that although he was contemporaneous with most of the men who made history in the middle and latter part of the nineteenth century —Pusey, Maurice, Manning, Newman, Keble, Kingsley, Huxley, Darwin, Spencer, Carlyle and Ruskin—yet he never knew either Darwin or Spencer and probably not Carlyle. Huxley he did not meet until 1882, and there appears to be no evidence to show that he ever came into touch with either Kingsley or Maurice.

This was a great loss to his daughter, for the position of the Arnolds entitled them to be in the midst of this aristocracy of intellect and culture. It is, however, fairly certain that she met some at least of these great ones. Newman she must have known in Ireland as a child, and again later when he was head of the Oratory School[1] and her father was on the staff as senior classical master.

She is almost sure also to have met Ruskin in Oxford while her father was at Wycliffe Hall.

However that may be, it is certain that as she grew up she took a lively interest in the problems

[1] At Birmingham.

in which these great philosophers and controversialists were engaged. It is more than likely that she heard them debated on all sides, for the country was aflame with political and theological discussion. And her work shows that she acquired a taste for these problems—especially for the religious ones.

Nor is this to be wondered at, for the whole Arnold family, belonging as they did to the Established Church and having some of their members actually holding office in that Church at the time, would naturally be deeply engrossed in the questions which seemed to be tearing it asunder.

From quite an early age, then, Miss Arnold must have become habituated to religious controversy and she would appear to have absorbed some of its spirit.

Yet she became no fierce partisan of either side, but—and this must be regarded as evidence of an exceptionally well-balanced mind—she took up a position outside that of the great factions and boldly pleaded—at a time when there were few of her opinion—for Reason in all things, even in religion. "It may be Christian but it is not sense," says Fountain, in *Helbeck of Bannisdale,* and Mrs. Ward was from the first anxious to combine the two things—she pleads for a Religion that will appeal to, and attract, men of sense.

Throughout the whole of her work the influence of her uncle Matthew on her religious views is obvious; but perhaps it is not more obvious in

any direction than in that which shows her attitude towards the Free Churches, and the effect of this influence is to lead her to do them rather less than justice.

This constitutes what appears to be a blemish in her otherwise well-poised judgment, for when we consider that the Nonconformist is numerically the equal of the Anglican it cannot but be regretted that he does not loom larger in the pages of a writer who has otherwise depicted our national life with considerable accuracy.

Arnold, however, had a superabundant portion of that ineffable contempt of the cultured for the uncultured which was a characteristic of his period, and among the uncultured he did not hesitate to class (and with some reason, it must be admitted) the Nonconformist of his day.

"But with the member of a Nonconforming or self-made religious community," he says, after a long eulogium of the Anglican, "how different! The sectary's *eigene Erfindungen*, as Goethe calls them,—the precious discoveries of himself and his friends for expressing the inexpressible, and defining the undefinable, in peculiar forms of their own, cannot but, as he has voluntarily chosen them, and is personally responsible for them, fill his whole mind. He is zealous to do battle for them and affirm them; for in affirming them he affirms himself, and that is what we all like. Other sides of his being are thus neglected, because the religious side, always tending in every spiritual

man to predominance over other spiritual sides, is in him made quite absorbing and tyrannous by the condition of self-assertion and challenge which he has chosen for himself. And just what is not essential in religion he comes to mistake for essential, and a thousand times the more readily because he has chosen it himself; and religious activity he fancies to consist in battling for it. All this leaves him little leisure or inclination for culture; to which, besides, he has no great institutions not of his own making, like the Universities connected with the national Church, to invite him; but only such institutions as, like the order and discipline of his religion, he may have invented for himself and invented under the sway of the narrow and tyrannous notions of religion fostered in him as we have seen. Thus, while a national establishment of religion favours totality, *hole-and-corner* forms of religion (to use an expressive popular word) inevitably favour 'provincialism.'"[1]

It seems not unreasonable to suppose that strong pronouncements like the above, coming from a source which she had probably been taught to look up to and revere, would make a profound impression on the alert and receptive mind of a young woman of Mary Augusta Arnold's temperament.

All the Arnolds worshipped Culture, and she appears to have been no exception, though it must

[1] *Culture and Anarchy*, pp. 25, 26.

be observed that in her later work there is evidence of a broadening of the mind on this point, notably in *David Grieve*, where there are several uncultured *personæ* and they are portrayed, moreover, without any suspicion of bias.

Still, it is a feature to be noted that in her accounts of village communities (vide *Marcella* and *Robert Elsmere*) it is always the Vicar who figures among the chief personages, though Mrs. Ward can hardly fail to be cognisant of the fact that every village in the kingdom has its chapel or "Bethel," and that the minister of such chapel is a person not without a certain influence on the social life of the community—his flock, indeed, often outnumbering the congregation of the national church; this being so more especially in the North of England, in Cornwall, and in Wales.

Professor A. V. Dicey has noticed in the literature of an earlier generation a similar unfairness to Nonconformity :—

"Modern novels," he says, "are, almost without exception, friendly in tone towards the Established Church, and teem with clerical heroes." (As these words were used in 1898 it is highly probable that the professor had in his mind, among others, the works of Mrs. Humphry Ward.) "Contrast the treatment—in the main, the grossly unfair treatment—which Dissenting ministers have, till fifty or sixty years ago, received at the hands of novel writers. Warren's *Ten Thousand a Year*

tells us how Dissenters were regarded by a vulgar but effective Tory satirist in 1839. The meanest character in a novel which abounds with vulgar characters vulgarly caricatured, is a Dissenter who ends his career as an agitator against Church rates, whilst the gentleman-like virtues of the Tory rector are made the object of unctuous admiration. The Shepherd of the *Pickwick Papers* and the Chadband of *Bleak House* are caricatures of Dissenting vulgarity and cant, drawn by a man of genius who began life as a Benthamite Liberal, who at no period of his career believed himself to be a Tory, and who was the most widely read novelist of his day." [1]

Further than this, the sectarian has played no inconsiderable part in our national history and literature. John Stuart Mill, Bright, Hume, Wesley, Milton, Bunyan and Cromwell were all Nonconformists.

But according to Arnold they are all outside the pale,—uncultured, " Philistines."

" But the point of view of culture," he says, " keeping the mark of human perfection simply and broadly in view, and not assigning to this perfection as religion or utilitarianism assign to it, a special and limited character,—this point of view, I say, of culture is best given by these words of Epictetus :—' It is a sign of ἀφυΐα,' says he,—that is, of a nature not finely tempered,—' to

[1] *Law and Opinion in England* (London : Macmillan & Co., 1905), p. 327.

give ourselves up to things which relate to the body; to make, for instance, a great fuss about exercise, a great fuss about eating, a great fuss about drinking, a great fuss about walking, a great fuss about riding. All these things ought to be done merely by the way: the formation of the spirit and character must be our real concern.' This is admirable; and, indeed, the Greek word εὐφυία, finely tempered nature, gives exactly the notion of perfection as culture brings us to conceive it; a harmonious perfection, a perfection in which the characters of beauty and intelligence are both present, which unites 'the two noblest things,'—as Swift, who of one of the two, at any rate, had himself all too little, most happily calls them in his *Battle of the Books*,—'the two noblest of things, *sweetness and light*.' The εὐφυής is the man who tends towards sweetness and light; the ἄφυής, on the other hand, is our Philistine." [1]

M. André Chevrillon has admirably summed up the complete Arnold gospel in a few lines:—

"Pour Matthew Arnold l'Angleterre a besoin de se détendre, de s'humaniser, de se libérer un peu de l'obstiné labeur material ou elle s'ankylose, afin de se civiliser spirituellement. Il lui présente un ideal qui ressemble à celui de Ruskin; plus de douceur, plus de limière, plus de vie, sympathie humaine, c'est-à-dire plus de loisir, de bonheur et de beauté. Qu'elle cesse de vivre au jour le jour, sans une confusion de croyances, et

[1] *Culture and Anarchy*, pp. 95 and 96.

d'œuvres antagonistes et particulières qui ne dépassent jamais le point de vue égoiste et borné de la secte, de la corporation et de l'individu ! Qu'elle répudie ses anarchies de laisser faire, sa foi aux vertus du hasard, des routines, de l'empirisme pur, pour s'organiser suivant des idées générals, nationales et humaines, en prenant conscience de sa personne collective dont l'expression visible est l'Etat ! " [1]

Once, indeed, Mrs. Humphry Ward has so far broken away from what might be called " the Arnold tradition " as to make a hero of a " Philistine," David Grieve, the bookseller, a son of the people, bred on the land ; but then she is careful to give him at least a smattering of culture.

" In the next place," she says, " the books themselves had been a perpetual feast to him for weeks, enjoyed all the more keenly because of the secrecy in which it had to be devoured. The little gathering represented with fair completeness the chief books of the French ' philosophers,' both in the original French, and in those English translations of which so plentiful a crop made its appearance during the fifty years before and after 1800. There, for instance, lay the seventy volumes of Voltaire. Close by was an imperfect copy of the *Encyclopædia*, which Mr. Stephens was getting cheap ; on the other side a motley gathering of Diderot and Rousseau ; while Holbach's *System*

[1] *La Pensée de Ruskin* (Paris, Librairie Hachette, 1909), pp. 284, 285.

of Nature, and Helvétius *On the Mind*, held their rightful place among the rest.

"Through these books then, which had now been on the premises for some time—Mr. Stephens being a person of uncertain domicile, and unable as yet to find them a home—David had been freely ranging. Whenever Purcell was out of the way and customers were slack, he invariably found his way to this spot in the upper room. There, with his elbows on the top of the bookcase which ran under the window, and a book in front of him—or generally two, the original French and a translation—he had read Voltaire's tales, a great deal of the *Encyclopædia*, a certain amount of Diderot, for whom he cherished a passionate admiration, and a much smaller smattering of Rousseau. At the present moment he was grappling with the *Dictionnaire Philosophique* and the *Système de la Nature*, fortified in both cases by English versions." [1]

But perhaps the influence which mainly affected her life, and which probably inspired her to write the immortal *Robert Elsmere*, was Matthew Arnold's *Literature and Dogma*. This remarkable work, published in 1873 (when Mary Augusta Arnold had reached the impressionable and strenuous age of twenty-two), proclaiming as it did with no uncertain voice that "miracles do not happen," shook the religious world to its very foundations.

[1] *The History of David Grieve* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1906), Popular edition, p. 133.

True, the convulsion was confined to the cultured classes—those classes which would be likely to read and talk about such a book by such a writer—yet the force of the upheaval made itself felt indirectly to a much greater extent, and we shall show later how it became Mrs. Ward's own mission to spread her uncle's gospel among the other classes—Philistines, Barbarians and Populace—to use his own classification.

It must not be supposed for a moment that Arnold's object was antagonistic to religion; on the contrary, it was meant to be helpful. In the Preface he says:—

"It cannot be but that the revolution should come, and that it should be here felt passionately, profoundly, painfully. In regard to it, however, there is incumbent on every one the utmost duty of considerateness and caution. There can be no surer proof of a narrow and ill-instructed mind, than to think and uphold that what a man takes to be the truth on religious matters is always to be proclaimed. Our truth on these matters and likewise the error of others, is something so relative, that the good or harm likely to be done by speaking ought always to be taken into account. 'I keep silence at many things,' says Goethe, 'for I would not mislead men, and am well content if others can find satisfaction in what gives me offence.' The man who believes that his truth on religious matters is so absolutely the truth, that say it when, and where, and to whom he will, he cannot

but do good with it, is in our day almost always a man whose truth is half blunder, and wholly useless." [1]

Once stated, however, his language is clear enough.

"Let us admit," he says, "that the Bible cannot possibly die; but then the churches cannot even conceive the Bible without the gloss which they at present put upon it, and this gloss, as certainly, cannot possibly live. . . . It is a gloss they *all* put upon it, calling it the substratum of belief common to all Christian churches, and largely shared with them even by natural religion. It is this so-called axiomatic basis which must go, and it supports all the rest." [1]

And again—

"Here, then, is the problem: to find, for the Bible, for Christianity, for our religion, a basis in something which can be verified, instead of in something which has to be assumed. So true and prophetic are Vinet's words: 'We *must*,' he said, 'make it our business to bring forward the rational side of Christianity, and to show that for thinkers, too, it has a right to be an authority.' Yes, and the problem we have stated must be the first stage in the business. With this problem unsolved, all other religious discussion is idle trifling." [2]

This is precisely the attitude towards Chris-

[1] *Literature and Dogma* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1910), preface, pp. vii. and viii.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 12 and 13.

tianity and the Bible which Mrs. Ward takes in *Robert Elsmere* and *David Grieve*. One excerpt, culled at random from many a score, will suffice to make clear this point. Flaxman, writing to his aunt, Lady Charlotte, is giving an account of Elsmere's work in London :—

"Then follows some passage from the life of Christ. Elsmere reads it and expounds it, in the first place, as a lecturer might expound a passage of Tacitus, historically and critically. His explanation of miracle, his efforts to make his audience realise the germs of miraculous belief which each man carries with him in the constitution and inherited furniture of his mind, are some of the most ingenious — perhaps the most convincing—I have ever heard. My heart and my head have never been very much at one, as you know, on this matter of the marvellous element in religion.

"But then when the critic has done, the poet and the believer begin. Whether he has got hold of the true Christ is another matter ; but that the Christ he preaches moves the human heart as much as—and in the case of the London artisan, more than—the current orthodox presentation of him, I begin to have ocular demonstration." [1]

[1] *Robert Elsmere* (London : T. Nelson & Sons, 1909), p. 553. It should be noted here that although Nelson's edition of certain of Mrs. Ward's works is quoted, the original publishers in all cases—except that of *Daphne*, (Cassell's)—are Messrs. Smith, Elder & Co.

The Arnold influence has been dealt with at some length because it appears to have been a very powerful one; but it was by no means the only influence that affected Mrs. Ward's work. Traces can be found of the pessimism of Amiel, whose *Journal Intime* Mrs. Ward translated into English in 1885, three years before the appearance of *Robert Elsmere*; and who can doubt that in delineating the character of Langham, Mrs. Ward had in mind consciously or unconsciously the "volonté qui voudrait vouloir, mais impuissante à se fournir à elle-même des motifs." The soul petrified by the sentiment of the infinite, left its impress deep in the mind of the translator.

In her Introduction to this work Mrs. Ward says:—

"The result of another soul's tragedy, another conflict and failure, which throws fresh light on the mysterious capacities of human nature, and warns us, as the letters of Obermann in their day warned the generation of George Sand, that with the rise of new intellectual perceptions new spiritual dangers come into being, and that across the path of continuous evolution which the modern mind is traversing there lies many a *selva oscura*, many a lonely and desolate track, in which loss and pain await it. The story of the *Journal Intime* is a story to make us think, to make us anxious; but at the same time in the case of a nature like Amiel's, there is so much high poetry thrown off from the long process of conflict,

the power of vision and of reproduction which the intellect gains at the expense of the rest of the personality, is in many respects so real and so splendid, and produces results so stirring often to the heart and imagination of the listener, that in the end we put down the record, not so much with a throb of pity, as with an impulse of gratitude. The individual error and suffering is almost forgotten; all that we can realise is the enrichment of human feeling, the quickened sense of spiritual reality bequeathed to us by the baffled and solitary thinker whose *via dolorosa* is before us." [1]

Is it not evident that the *Journal* made a deep impression on the mind of the translator?

See with what compassionate sympathy—such surely as only a woman can be capable of—she fills in the shadows in the character of Langham, her wonderful embodiment of the Amiel temperament.

"So the great moment has come and gone! The one supreme experience which life and his own will had so far rigidly denied him, is his. He has felt the torturing thrill of passion—he has evoked such an answer as all men might envy him—and fresh from Rose's kiss, from Rose's beauty, the strange maimed soul falls to a pitiless analysis of his passion, her response! One moment he is at her feet in a voiceless trance of gratitude and tenderness; the next—is nothing what it promises to be?—and has the boon already,

[1] Amiel's *Journal* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1906), pp. 25, 26.

now that he has it in his grasp, lost some of its beauty, just as the sea-shell drawn out of the water, where its lovely iridescence tempted eye and hand, loses half its fairy charm ?

" Think of the little house—the children—the money difficulties—she, spiritually starved, every illusion gone—you, incapable soon of love, incapable even of pity, conscious only of a dull rage with her, yourself, the world ! Bow the neck—submit—refuse that long agony for yourself and her, while there is still time. *Kismet—Kismet !* And spread out before Langham's shrinking soul there lay a whole dismal Hogarthian series, image leading to image, calamity to calamity, till in the last scene of all the maddened inward sight perceived two figures, two grey and withered figures, far apart, gazing at each other with cold and sunken eyes across dark rivers of sordid irremediable regret. The hours passed away, and in the end, the spectre self, a cold and bloodless conqueror, slipped back into the soul which remorse and terror, love and pity, a last impulse of hope, a last stirring of manhood, had been alike powerless to save." [1]

What art could be finer, what sympathy greater, what analysis more penetrating than this ? And is not the impress of Amiel visible in every word of it ? As in the *Journal* the soul is stirred by the cry of the strong man in his failure, the heart is

[1] *Robert Elsmere* (London : T. Nelson & Sons, 1910), pp. 433, 434.

torn with sorrow as in sympathy it feels his fears, condones his contradictions, and helpless, surveys the struggle which must inevitably end in despair.

But perhaps the greatest of all the influences that helped from time to time to mould that mental entity which we know as Mrs. Humphry Ward, was the living personality of Thomas Hill Green—the " Grey " of *Robert Elsmere.*

Green was a pupil of Jowett. He became a lecturer on Ancient and Modern History at Balliol in the year 1860. His somewhat unorthodox religious views made him unwilling to follow the course usual to a Fellow in those days, and take Holy Orders, though after some hesitation he signed the Thirty-Nine Articles on taking his M.A. degree.

In 1870, Jowett became Master of the College and Green, as tutor, had now the whole subordinate management in his hands. Although lacking some of the more superficial talents such as easily win popularity, his simplicity, power and earnestness always commanded respect.

He soon grew to be on easy terms with his pupils and he acquired the habit of taking some of them with him as companions in the Long Vacation. He lectured on Aristotle and the early Greek philosophy, and especially on the English thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. At this time the writings of John Stuart Mill exercised a most potent influence in Oxford.

Green became the leading exponent of the

principles of Kant and Hegel, and attracted many able followers. In 1878 he was elected to the Whyte professorship of Modern Philosophy, and the lectures he delivered in this capacity form the substance of his *Prolegomena to Ethics* which was published in 1883.

He died in 1882 and his works have been collected and edited in three volumes by Professor Nettleship.

Vol. I. includes his introduction to Hume and his criticisms upon Herbert Spencer; Vol. II., his lectures; Vol. III., lectures on the New Testament with notes by himself and his hearers.

This last, of course, is the volume which will prove of the greatest interest to students of the theological difficulties under which Elsmere laboured, and it is this volume which contains much of the matter that Mrs. Ward has drawn up in writing her story.

That story she dedicated:

To the Memory of
MY TWO FRIENDS
separated, in my thought of them, by much diversity of opinion; linked in my faith about them, to each other, and to all the shining ones of the past, by the love of God and the service of man:
THOMAS HILL GREEN
and
LAURA OCTAVIA MARY LYTTLETON.

(the words "the service of man" are significant, as we shall show later).

Green was a man, we are told by his contemporaries, whose homely exterior, reserved manner, and middle-class radicalism were combined with a singular loftiness of character. He recalls, in some ways, Wordsworth, of whom he was, to a certain degree, a disciple in philosophy; and Bright, whom he followed in politics. In early life he was undoubtedly impressed by the work of Carlyle and Maurice. He probably developed the philosophical ideas, congenial to him from the first, by a sympathetic study of Kant and Hegel.[1]

"His central conception," says his biographer, "is that the Universe is a single eternal activity or energy, of which it is the essence to be self-conscious, that is, to be itself, and not itself in one. His religious philosophy is a constant reproduction of the idea that the whole of human experience is the self-communication or revelation of the eternal and absolute being."[2]

"Whatever may be the ultimate verdict of his philosophy" (says the Fellow of Balliol), "even his opponents must realise the value of his criticism of their position and of his attempted ethical construction. While denouncing the philosophical claims of the utilitarian school, he sympathised to a great extent with their practical aims, and

[1] Information *re* Green gathered from the *Dictionary of National Biography.*

[2] R. L. Nettleship, *The Works of Thomas Hill Green.* Preface to vol. iii. p. lxxv.

admired J. S. Mill as a thinker of exceptional worth.

"As a critic he was at the same time magnanimous and unsparing, both by his character and his logical power he gave a potent stimulus to many thinkers who have greatly modified his position." [1]

The words put into the mouth of Grey by Mrs. Ward are noteworthy as being the first expression of that doubt — that questioning of the verbal inspiration of the Scriptures—which caused such a shock to many minds on the first appearance of *Robert Elsmere,* and which brought forth an eloquent defence from no less a person than Mr. Gladstone himself in the *Nineteenth Century Review.* Here is the passage which led to so much controversy :—

"Much of the sermon itself, indeed, was beyond him. It was on the meaning of St. Paul's great conception, 'A death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness.' What did the Apostle mean by a death to sin and self? What were the precise ideas attached to the words 'risen with Christ'? Are this death and this resurrection necessarily dependent upon certain alleged historical events? Or are they not primarily and were they not, even in the mind of St. Paul, two aspects of a spiritual process perpetually re-enacted in the soul of man and constituting the

[1] A Life of Thomas Hill Green has been written by Professor Nettleship and forms the Preface to Green's works, vol. iii.

veritable revelation of God? Which is the stable and lasting witness of the Father; the spiritual history of the individual and the world, or the envelope of miracle to which hitherto mankind has attributed so much importance?" [1]

"Grey" is here obviously thinking along the same lines as Arnold had done some time earlier.

"Miracles," says Arnold, "have to go the same way as clericalism and tradition; and the important thing is, not that the world should be acute enough to see this (there needs, indeed, no remarkable acuteness to see it) but that a great and progressive part of the world should be capable of seeing this, and of yet holding fast to Christianity." [2]

Mrs. Ward, however, is careful to show that "Grey" also is not antagonistic to Christianity.

"The whole basis of Grey's thought," she says, "was ardently idealist and Hegelian. He had broken with the popular Christianity, but for him, God, consciousness, duty, were the only realities. None of the various forms of materialistic thought escaped his challenge; no genuine utterance of the spiritual life of man but was sure of his sympathy. It was known that after having prepared himself for the Christian ministry, he had remained a layman because it had become

[1] *Robert Elsmere* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1910), pp. 60, 61.

[2] *Literature and Dogma* (Preface to the Popular Edition) (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1910), p. 21.

impossible to him to accept miracle; and it was evident that the commoner type of Churchman regarded him as an antagonist, all the more dangerous because he was so sympathetic." [1]

Just as Arnold himself was careful to assert time after time and in ever-varying form about his *Literature and Dogma*:—

"It is not an attack upon miracles and the supernatural. It unreservedly admits, indeed, that the belief in them has given way and cannot be restored, it recommends entire lucidity of mind on this subject, it points out certain characters of weakness in the sanction drawn from miracles, even while the belief in them lasted. Its real concern, however, is not with miracles, but with the natural truth of Christianity." [2]

Still the fact is that both it and *Robert Elsmere* were popularly regarded for a time as attacking Christianity.

But actually the message which Mrs. Ward set herself to convey to the vast public who read little else but fiction, was that there *is* a rational side of Christianity, and that dogma is *not* essential to true religion; but that personal service and devotion *are* essential. And the means whereby that message was conveyed was the novel *Robert Elsmere*, reinforced four years later by *The History of David Grieve*.

[1] *Robert Elsmere*, p. 64.

[2] *Literature and Dogma* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1910), p. 21.

The essence of Mrs. Ward's creed as stated in these two works, and more especially in the former, is practical Christianity, and from thence to Social Reform is but a short step, for was not Christ himself a great Social Reformer? We are not surprised, therefore, to find her next two works—*Marcella* and *Sir George Tressady*—occupied with this great subject. That Mrs. Ward had made a deep and earnest study of the ethical and religious movements of the times before arriving at her own conclusions, is evident throughout her work; but nowhere is it more marked than when she is analysing the mental attitude of David Grieve—witness her masterful handling of the subject, in Grieve's diary. There we have a concise statement of the whole religious difficulty; this diary represents admirably the questions and doubts which agitated this country at the time when *Robert Elsmere* appeared. The effect of thus popularising the controversy can well be imagined, and we learn without surprise that the public bought 170,000 copies of the work. For the Briton, be he English, Scotch, Welsh or Irish, loves controversy, and more especially religious controversy. How great was the service rendered to the nation when Mrs. Ward turned the trend of all this verbose enthusiasm towards the nobler work of social service, it would be difficult to overestimate, but it is just at this point that she has broken away from the Arnold tradition, and has followed rather Cotter Morison.

The whole tone of *Literature and Dogma* and of *Culture and Anarchy* is personal, but Morison's view is national.

"The complexity of social problems," he says, "is so great, they need regarding from so many points of view, their right solution is so important, their wrong solution so perilous, that they can no longer be left to any official or limited class of inquirers. They concern all citizens; and few duties in our day are so imperative as their earnest, persistent, and reflective study. They do not happily need much book-lore. Clear heads and resolute hearts, aided by eyes open to the facts around them, will for this purpose more avail than academic culture. The modern man in search of well-being has two ends to bear in mind: First, his own self-cultivation, especially of his heart, as incomparably most important both to his own happiness and that of others. Secondly, it behoves him to help his fellows to the extent of his power, by such improvements in the practice and theory of life as he can make good by sound reasons. In this direction I admit that he may encounter not prosperity, but persecution or even worse; but if he is a true man he will not mind that. Nor will the probable gloom of the coming time daunt brave hearts. There is a *mauvais pas* before us all, which we must get over as best we can. But nerve and resolution can do wonders; and men never appear and act so much to their advantage as when put undisguisedly on their

mettle. Not by the promise of soft and smooth things are they attracted, but by the difficult and the dangerous. Bad as the forecast is, and great as the suffering before long may be, if only adequately realised, and faced with neither panic fear nor thoughtless hope, the situation might begin to improve almost at once." [1]

Here breathes the spirit of the true patriot and reformer, "to help his fellows"—nothing of the egoist in this. Morison, in fact, was probably thinking of Arnold when he wrote the paragraph; at any rate the sentence "clear heads and resolute hearts . . . will . . . more avail than academic culture" would seem to savour of a gentle admonition to the great apostle of culture.

Arnold's, indeed, is a purely selfish form of religion, and one that would ill serve an ambitious and progressive nation like our own; for, just as throughout Nature all the varied forms of life, in seeking their own satisfaction, yet unconsciously serve Nature's ends in striving for their own reward, so (as it is with individuals) is it with nations.

In the development of a nation mutual aid must represent a higher form of life than struggle does, especially when the choice is dictated by the conscious and voluntary co-operation of the nation in the fulfilment of its own higher destiny.

After all, a nation's progress is largely governed

[1] *The Service of Man* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Co., 1888), Preface, pp. xxvi and xxvii.

by its ideals. These in turn are made up of the ideals of that country's citizens. Wrong ideals do not pay, for the nation any more than for the individual, and because, where there is progress, ideals must change, and ideas must develop, so economic systems, like systems of belief, have their day and cease to be. A new order is but part of the great system of evolution. It is for these reasons that the present condition of economic chaos that may be observed both in England and the United States, with their vast contrasts of wealth and poverty, mark a transitional stage, rather than a fixed and permanent condition.

It is clear, therefore, that Arnold's doctrine of individual conduct is insufficient for the needs of to-day. Modern Imperialism demands that each man should take an altruistic view of his fellows. No one member of a great empire can live for himself alone without injury to that empire. The condition of his fellows must needs be one of his first considerations, for no empire can exist the units of which are below a certain standard in physical and mental condition.

Mrs. Ward herself would seem to have thoroughly grasped this imperial idea, although she does not propound it in quite the same form as has been done here. Still she makes it always part of her hero's business—Robert Elsmere being still the hero—to care for the condition of those with whom he is brought into contact, and to make strenuous efforts to better those conditions whenever they

are found to be below the standard required by a life, mentally, morally and physically healthy: witness Elsmere's work in the East End of London:—

"Another project of Robert's, started as soon as he had felt his way a little in the district, was the scientific Sunday School. This was the direct result of a paragraph in Huxley's *Lay Sermons*, where the hint of such a school was first thrown out. However, since the introduction of science-teaching into the Board Schools, the novelty and necessity of such a supplement to a child's ordinary education is not what it was. Robert set it up mainly for the sake of drawing the boys out of the streets in the afternoons, and providing them with some other food for fancy and delight than larking and smoking and penny dreadfuls. A little simple chemical and electrical experiment went down greatly; so did a botany class, to which Elsmere would come armed with stores of flowers, one to be picked to pieces, the other to be distributed according to memory and attention. A year before he had had a number of large coloured plates of tropical fruit and flowers prepared for him by a Kew assistant. These he would often set up on a large screen, or put on the walls, till the dingy schoolroom became a bower of superb blossom and luxuriant leaf, a glow of red and purple and orange. And then—still by the help of pictures—he would take his class on a tour through strange lands, talking to them of China or Egypt or South America, till they followed him

up the Amazon, or into the Pyramids, or through the Pampas, or into the mysterious buried cities of Mexico, as the children of Hamelin followed the magic of Pied Piper." [1]

In essence this is true national and imperial work that Elsmere is doing, though apparently local in character. Yet who can envisage the ultimate good that might result from a semination of hundreds of such centres of activity throughout the land, radiating their moral influences around them, raising the physical and ethical standards of all who come within their sphere of influence! In such centres or settlements we find life, work, and faith, all beautifully blended in the service of mankind, and here surely we have the realisation of our author's own aspirations after a religious and moral ideal, that ideal which she made it her mission to preach through the medium of fiction.

Now the question naturally arises, "Is it legitimate to use the novel for the purposes of propaganda?" and the author herself has answered it fully and finally:—

"As one looks back over the history of the novel nothing seems to be so clear as that it has 'borne' everything of whatever kind that a writer who could make himself heard was minded to put into it. In the days of Cervantes the novel, fishlike, swallowed other novels whole, and the adventures

[1] *Robert Elsmere* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1910), p. 456.

of the immortal knight came to a standstill while the fortunes and career of 'El Curioso Impertinente' unrolled. In the days of *Julie* the *cadre* supplied by the loves of Saint-Preus and Madame de Wolmar admitted of the introduction of a vast amount of material which would make the critic of to-day rise in his wrath—discussions of the opera, of the qualities of women of the world, of the existence of God, of the proper management of children and estates, and much else. The discussions happened to be interesting then, and they are interesting historically now. Rousseau wrote as the spirit moved him, choosing out of the variegated spectacle of life what attracted him, and the instant response of his generation —in spite of the sarcasms of Voltaire—showed that he was right. *Wilhelm Meister* wanders, digresses, and preaches as Goethe pleases, but the man who wrote of life and thought in it, had lived and thought; and, formless as it is, the book has entered into the training of Europe. Chateaubriand, George Sand and Victor Hugo have bent the novel to all the purposes of propaganda in turn. Theology, politics, social problems and reforms, they have laid hands on them all, and have but stirred the more vibrations thereby in the life of their time. And which of them, from *Don Quixote* downwards, will you save from this opprobrious category of 'novels with a purpose'? —which of them has not tried in its own way and with its own vehemence to 'reform the world,'

whether it be by throwing an effete literature out of window, or by holding up the picture of married virtue and religious faith beside that of illicit love and empty doubt, or by showing forth the wrongs and difficulties of women, or by the passionate attempt to make the world realise the pressure of the pyramid of our civilised society on the poor and the weak at its base." [1]

And finally coming to close quarters, she says :—

" As for me, I am so made that I cannot picture a human being's development without wanting to know the whole, his religion as well as his business, his thoughts as well as his actions. I cannot try to reflect my time without taking account of forces, which are at least as real and living as any other forces, and have at least as much to do with the drama of human existence about me. ' The two great forming agencies of the world's history have been the religious and the economic,' says Professor Marshall. Every one will agree that in his own way the novelist may handle the economic. By and by we shall all agree that in his own way he may handle the ' religious.' For every artist of whatever type there is one inexorable law. Your ' criticism of life ' must be fashioned under the conditions of imaginative truth and imaginative beauty. If you, being a novelist, make a dull story, not all the religious argument in the world will or should save you.

[1] *The History of David Grieve* (London : Smith, Elder & Co., popular edition, 1906), Preface, pp. xv and xvi.

For your business is to make a novel, not a pamphlet; a reflection of human life, and not merely a record of intellectual conception. But under these conditions everything is open—try what you will—and the response of your fellows, and that only, will decide your success." [1]

It will be noted that Mrs. Ward in this brief *apologia* goes to France and Germany for her models. Maine, on the other hand, looks at home in noting the same tendencies, and singles out Dickens as the arch-propagandist.

"Dickens," he says, "who spent his early manhood among the politicians of 1832 trained in Bentham's school, hardly ever wrote a novel without attacking an abuse. The procedure of the Court of Chancery and of the Ecclesiastical Courts, the delays of the Public Offices, the costliness of divorce, the state of the dwellings of the poor, and the condition of the cheap schools in the North of England furnished him with what he seemed to consider, in all sincerity, the true moral of a series of fictions." [2]

Some have questioned the wisdom, or the justice, or the advisability of these popular campaigns against long-standing abuses, but one great Englishman at least has not hesitated to use his trenchant pen in defence of the method as practised by Dickens.

"I wish," says Ruskin, "that he could think

[1] *The History of David Grieve* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., popular edition, 1906), Preface, p. xviii.

[2] *Popular Government*, p. 153.

it right to limit the brilliant exaggeration to works written only for public amusement; and when he takes up a subject of high national importance, such as that which he handled in *Hard Times*, that he would use severer and more accurate analysis. . . . But let us not lose the use of Dickens's wit and insight, because he chooses to speak in a circle of stage fire. He is entirely right in every book he has written; and all of them, but especially *Hard Times*, should be studied with close and earnest care by persons interested in social questions. They will find much that is partial, and, because partial, apparently unjust; but if they examine all the evidence on the other side, which Dickens seems to overlook, it will appear, after all their trouble, that his view was the finally right one, grossly and sharply told." [1]

The evidence available, therefore, would appear to point to good service having been rendered to the State through the medium of fiction, and so it may be assumed that Mrs. Ward is not only amply justified, but that she even thereby acquires some of the glamour of a public benefactor.

[1] *Unto This Last* (London: George Allen & Sons, 1877), 2nd edition, pp. 14, 15.

CHAPTER III

HER LITERARY WORK—THE INFLUENCE OF FRANCE

MRS. HUMPHRY WARD would hardly be classed among the prolific writers. She has produced in thirty years, fourteen novels, two plays, one translation, one short story, and numerous articles. The novels are as follows, in chronological order :—

1881	.	*Milly and Olly.*
1886	.	*Miss Bretherton.*
1888	.	*Robert Elsmere.*
1892	.	*The History of David Grieve.*
1894	.	*Marcella.*
1896	.	*Sir George Tressady.*
1898	.	*Helbeck of Bannisdale.*
1900	.	*Eleanor.*
1903	.	*Lady Rose's Daughter.*
1905	.	*The Marriage of William Ashe.*
1906	.	*Fenwick's Career.*
1909	.	*Daphne.*
1910	.	*Canadian Born.*
1911	.	*The Case of Richard Meynell.*

Omitting the first, which is simply a children's story, these works may be classified as follows :—

(*a*) Stories with some question of Religious Controversy as the chief theme:—*Robert Elsmere, David Grieve, Helbeck of Bannisdale, The Case of Richard Meynell.*

(*b*) Stories involving problems of Social Reform:—*Marcella* and *Sir George Tressady.*

(*c*) Studies of Character:—*Miss Bretherton, Eleanor, Lady Rose's Daughter.*

(*d*) Studies of certain Phases of Society:—*The Marriage of William Ashe* (Political), *Fenwick's Career* (Artistic), *Canadian Born* (Colonial).

This division is of course arbitrary, for each romance contains studies of character, and the whole series might be re-classified as studies of certain phases of society.

It will be seen that the author's average time for writing a romance is two years, but *David Grieve,* her longest, and (according to the view of many critics) the most polished output from her pen, occupied double the average time. Her busiest year was 1905, during which she wrote and produced the play *Agatha* as well as the romance *Fenwick's Career.* The other play from her pen is a dramatised version of her story *Eleanor,* which was successfully produced at the Court Theatre in 1902. *Canadian Born* also took only two years to write, for it is the result of her travels in Canada in the months of May and June 1908. In addition, Mrs. Ward has contributed articles to *Macmillan's Magazine,* the *Nineteenth Century,* and the *Quarterly Review.*

She wrote also the articles on "Bishops" and "Kings" in Vols. II. and III. of Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.

In 1885 she published a translation of Amiel's *Journal Intime*, but there is no evidence as to the time occupied in its production.

Truly a life of steady purpose faithfully fulfilled. If Amiel's *Journal* occupied the full four years from 1881 to 1885, there is only one break in the whole issue, namely, 1906 to 1908. And it must always be remembered that Mrs. Ward has had the duties of a wife and mother (she has a son and two daughters) to be performed side by side with her literary work. Only a personality in whom the genius for writing is strongly developed could carry out such a double task, and with such success.

She comes, of course, of a literary strain, and so had the writing tradition inbred from the cradle, but of how many others may the same thing be said and how few have profited by it!

We have already (in Chap. II.) traced the influence of her uncle's work on her ethical and religious aspirations. We are able also to trace the same influence in her literary work. Thus, Arnold would divide up all humanity into three classes, namely, Aristocrats (Barbarians), Middle-class (Philistines) and Proletarians (Populace).

"The second thing to be borne in mind," he says, "I have indicated several times already. It is this. All of us, so far as we are Barbarians, Philistines, or Populace, imagine happiness to

consist in doing what one's ordinary self likes. What one's ordinary self likes differs according to the class to which one belongs, and has its severer and its lighter side; always, however, remaining machinery, and nothing more. The graver self of the Barbarian likes honours and consideration; his more relaxed self, field sports and pleasure. The graver self of one kind of Philistine likes fanaticism, business and money-making; his more relaxed self, comfort and tea-meetings. Of another kind of Philistine, the graver self likes rattening; the relaxed self, deputations, or hearing Mr. Odger speak. The sterner self of the Populace likes bawling, hustling, and smashing; the lighter self, beer. But in each class there are born a certain number of natures with a curiosity about their best self, with a bent for seeing things as they are, for disentangling themselves from machinery, for simply concerning themselves with reason and the will of God, and doing their best to make these prevail;—for the pursuit, in a word, of perfection." [1]

These last, of course, are the Cultured, "the little leaven, that leaveneth the whole lump," and it is from this group—it cannot be called a class—that Mrs. Ward draws her heroes and heroines and many of the more important characters in her stories.

[1] *Culture and Anarchy* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1910), pp. 195, 196.

Let us take the chief personages in *Robert Elsmere* and see how easily each falls into one of Arnold's three classes—unless, indeed, he or she belong to his elect, the Cultured.

Barbarians.—Sir Mowbray, Elsmere, Lady Charlotte, Mr. Wynnstay, Mrs. Darcy, Madame de Notteville, Hugh Flaxman, Lady Helen.

Philistines.—Mrs. Thornburgh, Mrs. Leyburn, Catherine, Agnes, Dr. Baker, Henslowe, Armistead, Edmondson.

Populace.—Mary Backhouse, Ned Irwin, Old Macdonald, Tom Wheeler.

Cultured.—Robert Elsmere, Rose, Mr. Grey, Langham, Mr. Wendover (the Squire).

A study of the story itself reveals the overwhelming importance of those characters classified above as Cultured—the others, indeed, being (with the exception of Catherine) mere pawns without whose help the story could have been told. Here, then, we see the influence of the teacher-uncle in all its fullness; Arnold preaches Culture—his niece writes a story in which all the chief personages are cultured.

Lest the classification should be thought to be peculiar to this one story, lest the Arnold influence should be supposed to apply only in this one case, let us apply the same test of classification to two more of the author's works, namely, *Marcella* and *David Grieve*—these two with *Robert Elsmere* being in the judgment of many the three works which will still be read

in the years when the others shall perhaps be forgotten.

Marcella.

Barbarians.—Lord Maxwell, Miss Raeburn, Aldous Raeburn, Lady Winterbourne, Lady Selina Farrell.

Philistines.—The Hardens, Mr. Boyce, Frank Leven, Betty Macdonald, Mr. Pearson.

Populace.—The Westalls, Dick Patton, Mrs. Jellison, the Hurds, Mrs. Jarvis, Mrs. Vincent.

Cultured.—Marcella, Wharton, Hallin, the Cravens, Mrs. Boyce.

Again the story is focussed about this last group, *plus* Aldous Raeburn (who might, perhaps, have been included among the Cultured), being, to a large extent, the struggle between Raeburn and Wharton for Marcella's affection. And now let us take

The History of David Grieve.

Here Mrs. Ward departs somewhat from her usual method by making her hero a son of the people : the effect of this on our test of classification is to considerably reduce the number of the first class :—

Barbarians.—Lady Driffield, Colonel Danby.

Philistines.—The Purcells, Mr. Doyle, M. Barbier, Madame Cervin.

Populace.—Louie Grieve, Hannah Grieve, Reuben Grieve, Jim Wigson, Margaret Dawson, John Dalby.

Cultured.—David Grieve, Canon Aylwin, Lord

Driffield, Mr. Ancrum, the Dean of Bradford, Marcia Wellesdon, Dora Lomax, Elsie Delaunay.

It may be thought that this is merely a natural tendency on the part of an author born and bred in a family of cultured persons. But does the history of literature bear out such a supposition? Did Victor Hugo, of military stock, write mainly of military matters? Did Balzac, of medical stock, lay his plots chiefly among the hospitals and doctors? Think of the immense variety of subjects dealt with by Dickens, the son of a clerk! And what of Hauff, Perrault, and Grimm, the great writers of fairy tales? No, such a proposition will not hold for a moment. The greatness of a writer of fiction must obviously depend on that writer's gift of imagination, dramatic power, analysis of character, presentation of the emotions, descriptions of nature. The influence of family on these matters is of quite secondary importance, but the influence of mind on mind is, on the contrary, often very marked. In support of this contention one has only to cite two well-known cases, namely, Chaucer's influence on Spencer, and Dickens's influence on Daudet. By analogy, then, we mark the influence of Matthew Arnold on Mrs. Humphry Ward.

And what a field of literature she has covered in her reading! There is probably no writer of romance in any language who can be compared with her in this respect. And, indeed, few writers

have had the advantage of being brought up in such a *milieu* as she was. In the Arnold household learning was in the air—the very times were learned by reason of the extraordinary wealth of great thinkers that the period produced. Let us take categorically by way of illustrating this point, the references to, or quotations from, the masters of literature and philosophy which are to be found in the work which brought fame to Mrs. Ward:—

Robert Elsmere.[1]

Jane Austen, p. 26; George Sand, p. 39; Shelley, id.; Wordsworth, id.; Shakespeare, p. 47; Goethe, id.; Spencer, p. 49; Ovid, id.; Virgil, id.; Pope, id.; Æschylus, id.; Milton, id.; Senancour (*Rêveries*), p. 58; Pusey, p. 75; George Herbert, p. 78; Keble, p. 79; Thomas à Kempis, p. 80; Ruskin, p. 169; Darwin, id.; Montaigne, p. 183; Ben Jonson, p. 193; Andrew Marvell, id.; Addison, id.; Swift, id.; Du Bellay (*Visions*), id.; Chateaubriand (*Mémoires d'Outre Tombe*), id.; Hooker, p. 194; Hume, id.; Schelling, p. 195; Humboldt, id.; Boeckh, id.; Niebuhr (*History*) and von Savigny, id.; Cato, p. 198; Addison, id.; Strauss (*Leben Jesu*); Baur and Ewald, id.; Newman (*Apologia*), id.; Madame de Staël, p. 211; Guizot, p. 212; Bacon, id.; Kingsley, p. 230; Maurice, p. 231; Ruskin, id.; Renan, p. 232; Molière, p. 238; Mommsen, p. 249; Augustine (*Confessions*), p. 260; Gibbon, p. 261; von Ranke, p. 296; Heine, id.; Livy, p. 308; Justinian, id.;

[1] (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1910).

Tacitus, p. 311; Westcott, p. 313; Bunyan, p. 331; Chaucer, p. 400; Brontë, p. 417; Walter Scott, p. 455; Carlyle, id.; Huxley (*Lay Sermons*), p. 456; Locke, p. 483; Comte, p. 491; Victor Hugo, p. 501; Montalembert, id.; Lammennais, id.; Maurice de Guérin, id.; Talleyrand, p. 502; Vinet, p. 554; Voltaire, p. 568; Tennyson, p. 574; Herbert Spencer, p. 575. A total of 75 of the masters of literature!

Sometimes the authority is quoted, as on p. 554:—

"I thought of a saying of Vinet's 'C'est pour la religion que le peuple a le plus de talent; c'est en religion qu'il montre le plus d'esprit.'"

Sometimes sub-quoted, as on p. 560:—

"Like Heine I am qualified to give lectures in heaven on the ignorance of doctors on earth."

Sometimes merely referred to, as on p. 574:—

"Then it would be the turn of his favourite poets—Wordsworth, Tennyson, Virgil."

—but always with a clear understanding, as the text shows, of the matters dealt with.

There is perhaps a pardonable pride on the part of the young author discernible in this display of erudition, but it is never obtrusive, and the whole subject is one that could not have been handled except by a person of generous culture and reading.

Perhaps that quality which is most lacking in Mrs. Ward's work is wit. In the eyes of a critic of Latin or Celtic origin this will appear to be a distinct defect, but we Anglo-Saxons do not so regard it. There is deeply implanted in our

natures an ineradicable respect for all that is serious and earnest, and had Mrs. Ward attempted to mingle wit with her wisdom, the result would have been to lessen the effectiveness of her message. For humour is still apt to be regarded with suspicion among us; and when introduced into matters that are not naturally humorous, it is deeply resented.

This fact has been recognised again and again by the great French critics, one of the most recent pronouncements on the subject being that of M. Firmin Roz:—"L'esprit est la forme alerte et brillante de l'intelligence pure, et l'Angleterre se méfie de l'intelligence pure: elle a, au contraire, la passion des réalités objectives." [1]

This is very true; but if Mrs. Ward lacks wit, she is not wanting in wisdom. Her extraordinary powers of characterisation are sufficient evidence of this; here and there, moreover, nuggets of wit, like the "wise sayings" of our fathers, are to be found embedded in the text. A few of these sayings have been dug out (to continue the metaphor) and are produced here as witnesses:—

"Men always make themselves believe what they want to believe."—*Miss Bretherton*, p. 138.

"There are two things that protect men (of a certain stamp) from their own lack of moral stamina; perpetual change of scene, that turns the world into a spectacle—and love."—*Sir George Tressady*, p. 181.

[1] *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 Mars 1910, p. 387.

"It is perhaps truer of the moral world than of the social that one half of it never conceives how the other half lives."—*Ibid.* p. 464.

"We use the words 'spiritual,' 'poetic,' in relation to human conduct; we talk as though all that the words meant were familiarly understood by us; and yet when the spiritual or poetic comes actually to walk among us—we find it amazing, almost inhuman."—*Ibid.* p. 526.

"For the woman that has come to hunger for her husband's step there is no more ennui."—*Ibid.* p. 529.

Neither does she despise the artless paradox:—

"That wonderful generosity that the poor show every day to the rich."—*The Marriage of William Ashe*, p. 182.

Mrs. Ward's one attempt at the writing of a short story can be frankly pronounced a complete success—*The Story of Bessie Costrell.* If the author has a fault it is to be found in a certain prolixity, an insistence of details which do not in any way add to the interest of the story but rather detract therefrom. *The Story of Bessie Costrell,* however, being a brief psychological study of the trial and fall of the heroine, a woman of the peasant class, requires a concentration of action which has been all to the good; the light and shade have here their due proportions, and the result is a masterly sketch of great power and interest.

And if Mrs. Ward has successfully painted the peasant—and who that has studied the earlier

part of *The History of David Grieve* can doubt this ?—how much more successful has she been in depicting the aristocrat ? In her various stories of what our French friends call " high life " she has given us a perfect gallery of likenesses of such astonishing verisimilitude that M. Firmin Roz says of them : " Je ne serais pas surpris quelles fussent des portraits." [1]

This is especially the case in *Lady Rose's Daughter,* where the characters of Lady Henry, Lord Lackington, Sir Wilfred Bury and Meredith are presented with remarkable precision and truth. The heroine is indeed an inspiration from Julie de Lespinasse ; and Lady Henry doubtless a blending of Mme de Deffand with some English lady of title of similar disposition, and well known to the author ; but this fact in no way detracts from the excellence of the characterisation.

Sometimes we think we can read history in her romances, as in *The Marriage of William Ashe,* which might be taken to be the story of Lord Melbourne, Lady Mary Lamb and Lord Byron ; or in *Fenwick's Career,* where many will see the career not of Fenwick but of Haydon the painter. Yet Mrs. Ward has duly warned us early in her own literary career against a too liberal divination of this nature. In an introductory note to *Miss Bretherton,* she says :—

" This charge of portraiture is constantly brought against the novelist, and it is always a difficult

[1] *Revue des Deux Mondes,* 15 Mars 1910.

one to meet; but one may begin by pointing out that, in general, it implies a radical misconception of the story-teller's methods of procedure. An idea, a situation is suggested to him by real life, he takes traits and peculiarities from this or that person whom he has known or seen, but this is all. When he comes to write—unless, of course, it is a case of malice and bad faith—the mere necessities of an imaginative effort oblige him to cut himself adrift from reality. His characters become to him the creatures of a dream, as vivid often as his waking life, but still a dream. And the only portraits he is drawing are portraits of phantoms, of which the germs were present in reality, but to which he himself has given voice, garb, and action." [1]

One cannot fail to observe from the frequent quotation of, and reference to, French authors, the influence exercised over Mrs. Ward's work by " that fascinating French literature which absorbs, generation after generation, the interests of two-thirds of those who are sensitive to the things of letters." [2] Let us note now some indications of the author's great admiration for the French theatre and drama.

The whole of the romance entitled *Miss Bretherton* is a story of the stage.

The heroine is an actress who, as far as her art

[1] *Miss Bretherton* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1895), pp. vii and viii.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 16.

is concerned, is a failure until she has been coached into confidence and conviction by no less a person than Eustace de Châteauvieux, the first secretary to the French Embassy and a constant contributor to the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. Throughout this book one finds frequent paragraphs of eulogium on the French theatre; let us quote a few in illustration.

"What folly it is ever to expect a great dramatic art in England. We have no sense of the rudiments of the thing. The French would no more tolerate such acting as this because of the beauty of the actress than they would judge a picture by its frame." [1]

"She has some capacity, of course; if only the conditions had been different—if she had been born within a hundred miles of the Paris Conservatoire, if her youth had been passed in a society of more intellectual weight!" [2]

"You remember Desforêts in this same theatre last year in Adrienne Lecouvreur? . . . What a gulf between the right thing and the wrong!" [3]

"I began to recall many an evening at the Français with you, and one part after another, one actor after another, recurred to me, till, as I realised afresh what dramatic intelligence and dramatic training really are, I fell into an angry contempt for our lavish English enthusiasms." [4]

[1] *Miss Bretherton* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1896), p. 37.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 43. [3] *Ibid.* p. 44. [4] *Ibid.* p. 48.

"Kendal took particular pains, when they glided off from the topic of his sister to more general matters, to make her (Miss Bretherton) realise some of the finer aspects of the French world of which she knew so little . . . the laborious technical training to which the dwellers on the other side of the Channel submit themselves so much more readily than the English in matters of art; the intellectual consciousness and refinement due to the pressure of an organised and continuous tradition, and so on." [1]

"French you positively must learn and quickly. I don't mean to say that we haven't good plays and a tradition of our own; but, for the moment, France is the centre of your art, and you cannot remain at a distance from it. The French have organised their knowledge; it is available for all who come. Ours is still floating and amateurish." [2]

"The ghastliness and horror of it are beyond her resources; she could not infuse them with that terrible beauty which Desforêts would have given to every line. But where is the English actress that has ever yet succeeded in it?" [3]

These extracts constitute a truly generous testimony to the excellence of the French theatre, and at the same time they witness to the deep impression made on the author by that theatre.

It is perhaps worthy of note, as a further evidence

[1] *Miss Bretherton*, p. 72.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 140.
[3] *Ibid.* p. 144.

of French influence, that in most of these romances one or two of the secondary characters are French. Thus :

In *Miss Bretherton* we have M. de Châteauvieux ;
In *Robert Elsmere* we have Mme de Netteville ;
In *Marcella* we have Mlle Rénier ;
In *David Grieve* we have M. Barbier, Mme Cervin, Mme Merichat, Elsie Delaunay, Montjoie, Regnault ;
In *Sir George Tressady* we have Justine ;
In *Lady Rose's Daughter* we have Mme Bornier ;
In *The Marriage of William Ashe* we have Mme d'Estrées.

Something of the depth of Mrs. Ward's knowledge of the French language may be gathered from her wonderfully faithful translation of Amiel ; and from certain trivial, but none the less interesting, indications in the text we see how firmly it has become implanted in her very being, for she unconsciously uses French forms of speech. Without referring to her constant use of French words and phrases—that is not half so convincing as the fact that from time to time in writing English she unwittingly uses the French idiom. Thus in *Sir George Tressady*—speaking of a report that Lord Ancoats would marry—she says : " Was it likely that he would settle himself so soon ? " The standard English is surely *settle down* ; *settle himself* is obviously *se ranger* rendered in English.

Yet another mark of French influence is the frequency with which she uses French words and

phrases. This is very strongly evident in *The History of David Grieve,* where scarcely a page appears without such use of French, but as the story is laid partly in France this is to some extent accounted for.

But the feature is nearly as strong in *Robert Elsmere,* and in *Miss Bretherton* it is even stronger. Taking the latter romance and running rapidly through it page by page we cull the following :— *Je ne connais en beauté, finesse, mélange du meilleur ton, salon, mauvaise honte, au naturel, raison d'être, aide-de-camp, rôle, débutante, parti, au sérieux, finesse, abandon, matinée, bien-être, pis-aller, engouement, en route, flâner, tisane, déjeuner, réputation surfaite, blasés, élan, au revoir, coup, camaraderie, gamins, salon, rôle,* — and *Miss Bretherton,* it must be remembered, is only about one-third the length of *Robert Elsmere* and of the majority of Mrs. Ward's novels.

It would be unfair to the author if one did not include in this general survey of her work some allusion to her remarkable power of describing scenery. This she does with a felicity of phrase and depth of colouring that make some of the passages the equal of anything of the kind in our language. Take a few specimens from *Robert Elsmere* :—

" The weather was growing darker and stormier ; the wind shook the house in gusts ; and the farther shoulder of High Fell, seen in distorted outline through the casemented window, was almost

hidden by the trailing rain-clouds. The mournful western light coming from behind the house struck the river here and there; almost everything else was grey and dark. A mountain ash, just outside the window, brushed the panes every now and then; and in the silence every surrounding sound —the rare movements in the next room, the voices of quarrelling children round the door of a neighbouring house, the far-off barking of dogs—made itself distinctly audible."—P. 141.

"A great stretch of dimpled land it was, falling softly towards the south and west, bounded by a shining twisted river, and commanding from all its highest points a heathery world of distance, now turned a stormy purple under the drooping fringes of the rain-clouds."—P. 190.

"The rich Normandy country lay all around them—the corn fields, the hedgeless tracts of white-flowered lucerne or crimson clover, dotted by the orchard trees which make one vast garden of the land as one sees it from a height. On the fringe of the cliff, where the soil became too thin and barren even for French cultivation, there was a wild belt, half heather, half tangled grass, and flower growth, which the English pair loved for their own special reasons. Bathed in light, cooled by the evening wind, the patches of heather glowing, the tall grasses swaying in the breeze, there were moments when its wide, careless, dusty beauty reminded them poignantly, and yet most sweetly, of the home of their first unclouded

happiness, of the Surrey commons and wildernesses."—P. 534.

And from *Marcella*:—

"After a very wet September, the October days were now following each other in a settled and sunny peace. The great woods of the Chilterns, just yellowing towards that full golden moment—short, like all perfection—which only beeches know, rolled down the hillslopes to the plain, their curving lines cut here and there by straight fir stems, drawn clear and dark on the pale background of sky and lowland. In the park, immediately below the window, groups of wild cherry and of a slender-leaved maple made spots of 'flame and amethyst' on the smooth falling lawns; the deer wandered and fed, and the squirrels were playing and feasting among the beech nuts."—P. 518.

And, again, from *Sir George Tressady*:—

"George slowly mounted his own hill. The chequered April day was declining, and the dipping sun was flooding the western plain with quiet light. Rooks were circling round the hill, filling the air with long-drawn sound. A cuckoo was calling on a tree near at hand, and the evening was charged with spring scents—scents of leaf and grass, of earth and rain. Below, in an oak-copse across the road, a stream rushed; and from a distance came the familiar rattle and thud of the pits."—P. 179.

But it is when she finds herself high up in the

"Rockies," with the glorious Canadian landscape at her feet, that our author is able to do full justice to her art.

"In front of her rose a wall of glacier sheer out of the water and thousands of feet above the lake, into the clear brilliance of the sky. On either side of its dazzling whiteness, mountains of rose-coloured rock, fledged with pine, fell steeply to the water's edge, enclosing and holding up the glacier; and vast rock pinnacles of a paler rose, melting into gold, broke, here and there, the gleaming splendour of the ice. The sun, just topping the great basin, kindled the ice surfaces, and all the glistening pinks and yellows, the pale purples and blood crimsons of the rocks, to flame and splendour; while shadows of coolest azure still held the hollows and caves of the glacier. Deep in the motionless lake, the shining snows repeated themselves, so also the rose-red rocks, the blue shadows, the dark buttressing crags with their pines. Height beyond height, glory beyond glory,—from the reality above, the eye descended to its lovelier image below, which lay there, enchanted and insubstantial, Nature's dream of itself." [1]

One of the most noteworthy characteristics of Mrs. Ward's work is her liking for strong personalities. Her heroines are generally women who

[1] *Canadian Born* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1910), p. 126.

have been brought up in a somewhat unorthodox, peculiar, or irregular manner, and in circumstances that would tend to foster and accentuate the individuality.

Thus Laura Fountain (in *Helbeck*) is an only child, whose mother dies in childbirth. Hence she comes to an unusual extent under the influence of her father, a scholar and an agnostic,—himself a "personality."

Marcella's father had lost his social position owing to a breach of the law for which he had suffered a period of imprisonment. It thus happened that the child, in order that all knowledge of the disgrace should be kept from her, spent an unduly long period of her childhood in a boarding-school where she was allowed to develop her instincts without any affectionate interest to guide her and mollify them.

Julie le Breton is a love-child, the daughter of an aristocratic mother and a father with an artistic temperament. Left an orphan at an early age, she goes to live with a former governess of hers, whose name she takes and with whom she lives in Belgium until she reaches maturity.

Kitty Bristol, again, is the daughter of an adventuress of Irish extraction and a noble *roué*, the Earl of Blackwater. She also grows up without any maternal affection, for her mother commits her to the care of the White Sisters in Paris, and goes herself to live in Rome.

In two of the cases the men who become the

lovers or husbands of these women are themselves men of strong individuality. Helbeck of Bannisdale, the lover of Laura Fountain, is an austere man, an ascetic, a rigid Catholic of an extreme type. Jacob Dalafield, the future Duke of Chudleigh whom Julie le Breton eventually marries, is gloomy and taciturn but with an unflinching sense of duty to himself and to his order.

Aldous Raeburn, who, after many trials and tribulations becomes the husband of Marcella, is typical of the real aristocrat; true to the traditions of his race, thorough master of himself, strongly imbued with a sense of duty to his country.

In natures so antagonistic as these love becomes somewhat of a conflict. Here we find no blissful meeting of soul with soul, no destiny early realised and quickly fulfilled. In cases such as these the woman at first becomes restive, disturbed in mind, even rebellious. The man of this type makes, as a rule, no attempt to force his will upon the other, for he recognises that that other will is often stronger than his own. He is content to watch and wait, to be ever ready to protect the beloved against herself; to guard her from the consequences of her own wilfulness; to defend and safeguard her honour and her personality.

Nothing, perhaps, shows this point more clearly than a paragraph wherein Mrs. Ward describes

with wonderful insight the birth of the love of Laura Fountain for Alan Helbeck :—

"But far away in an upper room, Laura had cried herself to sleep—only to wake again and again with the tears flooding her cheeks. Was it merely a disagreeable and exciting scene she had gone through? What was this new invasion of her life?—this new presence to the inward eye of a form and look that at once drew her and repulsed her. A hundred alien forces were threatening and focusing upon her—and out from the very heart of them came the strange drawing—this magnetism—this troubling misery. To be imprisoned in Bannisdale—under Mr. Helbeck's roof—for months and months longer—the thought was maddening to her. But when she imagined herself free to go—and far away once more from the old and melancholy house—among congenial friends and scenes—she was no happier than before. A little moan of anger and pain came, that she stifled against her pillow, calling passionately on the sleep that would, that must chase all these phantoms of fatigue and excitement—and give her back her old free self." [1]

The problem that Mrs. Ward would appear to have set herself is to reconcile the idea of love, which is of itself a thing of sympathy and harmony, with that of individualism, a thing of egotism and independence. In these circumstances love is forced to sacrifice something of the latter two

[1] *Helbeck of Bannisdale*, pp. 199, 200.

qualities in order to gain the benefit of the former two. This sacrifice is only accomplished after a struggle, and is only completely successful when the personality is capable of the higher emotions, devotion and duty.

In all Mrs. Ward's works the problem of love is treated with much delicacy, and always from a lofty standpoint. Here are to be found none of the intrigues and adulteries which have defaced the writings of so many authors.

Consider a moment the case of Marcella, the proud, the haughty, the headstrong daughter of a ruined father; the heiress of a dilapidated estate, and the bearer of a tarnished name. It is not love that first draws her to Aldous Raeburn; this she frankly admits to herself:—

"What was stirring in her was really a passionate ambition—ambition to be the queen and arbitress of human lives—to be believed by her friends, to make a mark for herself among women, and to make it in the most romantic yet natural way, without what had always seemed to her the sordid and unpleasant drudgeries of the platform, of a tiresome co-operation with, or subordination to, others who could not understand your ideas.

Of course, as it happened, people would say that she had tried to capture Aldous Raeburn for his money and position's sake. Let them say it. People with base minds must think basely; there was no help for it. Those whom she would

make her friends would know very well for what purpose she wanted money, power, and the support of such a man, and such a marriage. Her modern realism played with the thought quite freely; her maidenliness, proud and pure as it was, being nowise ashamed. Oh for something to carry her DEEP into life; into the heart of its widest and most splendid opportunities!" [1]

Destined as she was to love him in the end, to love him for his inflexible honour, his personal dignity, his obvious purity of purpose, she did not attain this end without passing through the refining fire of a lesser affection, of an affection, that is, for a man less worthy of her love.

It is as if she had been unable to finally settle herself into the affections of a man of Raeburn's worth, therein to rest and to blossom forth into the full flower of maternity without first putting to the test her own passionate impulsiveness, and suffering the humility such a surrender was bound to entail. And so she first loves Wharton, just as Kitty Bristol first loves Cliffe and Julie le Breton Warkworth.

Each of these women finds that she has bestowed her first affections on a man who proves to be unworthy of them, and is accordingly abased in her own estimation; she realises that her judgment has been at fault, and that gives a salutary shock to her self-conceit; henceforth she becomes a less self-centred and therefore a more lovable woman,

[1] *Marcella*, p. 74.

and in becoming herself more lovable she acquires the capacity of appreciating the more amiable qualities in the man she was at first disposed to undervalue. This, then, is the lesson that Mrs. Ward would teach, and it is well in symmetry with her general message—the message of the sacrifice of self for the benefit of the whole.

From this general survey of the chief characteristics of Mrs. Ward's work let us now pass to a more particular consideration of the story that made her famous, *Robert Elsmere.*

The whole tragedy of this work is Religion. To the honour of the author—to her sense of justice and fairplay, be it said that she has painted Catherine (who stands for the old-fashioned narrow Evangelicalism) as one Madonna-like in character—a type distinctly English, kind, self-controlled, patient, assiduous in her wifely duties, large-hearted. On the other hand, the Squire and Langham, though drawn with a sympathetic, understanding pen, are pictured in such a way as to cause one to shrink from their dry, almost inhuman, philosophic attitude.

But in the personality of Elsmere is struck the joyous note of hope and constructiveness that has been ringing quietly through the land since the dawn of the new century. Elsmere stands for a creed of no mere arid Unitarianism but for a Religion of Action—a blessed blend of all that is best in Christianity, with much that is good in the ideals of Marx and Spencer.

Science, historic criticism, has stripped Christianity of materialistic miracles and of dogma, but has left it only the more forceful for that human kindness, which is yet divine—and none the less so because it leaves no official place for the priest.

Certainly Science itself has grown, in the last decade, steadily less materialistic. *Fin-de-siècle* weariness, pessimism and despair have given way to hope.

This note of Hope is very marked throughout the story, and even within a few weeks of his death we find Elsmere saying (the scene is laid on the shore at Petites Dalles, near Fécamp, whither Elsmere has gone to recuperate from the effects of overwork) :—

" ' What will you gain ? A new sect ? '

" ' Possibly. But what we *stand* to gain is a new social bond,' was the flashing answer—' a new compelling force in man and in society. Can you deny that the world wants it ? What are you economists and sociologists of the new type always pining for ? Why, for that diminution of the self in man which is to enable the individual to see the *world's* ends clearly, and to care not only for his own but for his neighbour's interest, which is to make the rich devote themselves to the poor, and the poor bear with the rich. If man only *would*, he *could*, you say, solve the problems which oppress him. It is man's will which is eternally defective, eternally inadequate.

Well, the great religions of the world are the stimulants by which the power at the root of things has worked upon this sluggish instrument of human destiny. Without religion you cannot make the will equal to its tasks. Our present religion fails us ; we must, we will have another ! ' "

Some of the most remarkable pages in this novel are those in which Elsmere's doubts and fears are traced with infinite care and sympathy through all the agony of his gradual defeat in argument with Langham, with Grey, and, most crushing of all, with Wendover, to the point where he finally realises that his Faith has been broken, and, almost a greater agony, he foresees that this must lead to a separation from the " soul nearest to his own," that is, his wife's. The emotional climax is told with unerring skill :—

" In the stillness of the night there rose up weirdly before him a whole new mental picture—effacing, pushing out innumerable older images of thought. It was the image of a purely human Christ—a purely human, explicable, yet always wonderful Christianity. It broke his heart, but the spell of it was like some dream-country wherein we see all the familiar objects of life in new relations and perspectives. He gazed upon it fascinated, the wailing underneath checked a while by the strange beauty and order of the emerging spectacle. Only a little while ! Then with a groan Elsmere looked up, his eyes worn, his lips white and set.

"'I must face it—I must face it through. God help me!'

"A slight sound overhead in Catherine's room sent a sudden spasm of feeling through the young face. He threw himself down, hiding from his own foresight what was to be.

"'My darling, my darling! But she shall know nothing of it—yet.'" [1]

Thus after years of doubt and difficulty, Elsmere comes to see the wisdom of the Persian sage, Sadi, who thousands of years ago wrote:—

"Religion consists alone in the service of the people; it finds no place in the rosary, or prayer-rug, or tattered garment." [2]

What wonderful irony that the difficulties produced by the most modern researches of Biblical exegesis should force one back to the oldest wisdom of the old, old world!

Elsmere, having resigned his living, joined with Murray Edwardes and founded a settlement in Goswell Road, London, for the service of the people,—this is fiction. Some fifteen years later, the author of *Robert Elsmere*, with the help of Passmore Edwards, founded a settlement in Tavistock Place, London,—this is fact. Is it a remarkable coincidence, or is it merely the natural and inevitable sequence, given the mental

[1] *Robert Elsmere* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1909), pp. 314, 315.

[2] *The Bustan of Sadi* (London: John Murray, "Wisdom of the East" series, 1911), p. 14.

and moral energy of the author? We shall be safe, at any rate, in placing to the credit of Coincidence the similarity of the names borne by the coadjutors in each case.

In relating at some length, and with almost painful detail, the death of Elsmere, it must be supposed that Mrs. Ward has wished to show us that such enthusiasts are foredoomed to fall martyrs to their own convictions, consumed by the fires of their own zeal.

The story is no mere study of a character; it is rather an ideal that the author would hold up to our eyes. The work of Elsmere was destined to live long after its founder had died; it is even to be seen to this day; its influence can be traced in many a movement. His effort is only a fraction of the immense effort of the race. That, doubtless, is the precise meaning of the work—it is the great question of religious progress in England that Mrs. Ward has treated herein under the cloak of fiction. The ideal which Elsmere created and lived in his own life is the ideal which she would wish for her country and her race.

This particular consideration has been given to *Robert Elsmere* because it would appear to be no ephemeral work, but, like the *Lorna Doone* of Blackmore, or the *John Inglesant* of Shorthouse, a national classic, destined to retain for all time a permanent place in the literature of our language. And this is not primarily because of its intrinsic

merit, but rather on account of its brilliant portraiture of a definite and rather poignant phase or epoch in the history of the nation's mental development. In it Mrs. Ward has caught up the many vapour-like, molten sentiments and emotions of our people as in a crucible, and from it has given forth something that rings clear and true, with hope and promise of fulfilment in the future.

HER SOCIAL WORK—THE INFLUENCE ON ENGLAND

If in Mrs. Ward's literary work the influence of France is very marked, the influence of England is just as strongly marked in her social work.

In France the business of social amelioration is conducted either by the Church or by the State—the only exception of which we are cognisant being an association for giving assistance in maternity.

In England, on the contrary, the State, having provided for the destitute (workhouses), has left everything else to be done by individual philanthropists (*e.g.* Passmore Edwards, Toynbee, Barnardo, Carnegie), or by Societies (*e.g.* the Central (Unemployed) Board, the Church Army, the Salvation Army, the Charity Association, the Charity Organisation Society, etc.).

To give names of all the charities of this

country would require many pages: let it suffice to quote some official figures:[1]—

Number of Institutions.	Denomination of Charity.	Income for 1907.
803	Hospitals.	£3,924,670
206	Dispensaries	212,394
238	Convalescent Homes . .	330,417
163	Missions	3,513,946
517	Orphanages, Homes, and Charities	3,611,172
74	Institutions for the Blind .	267,228
29	Institutions for Deaf and Dumb	108,115
41	Institutions for Chronic and Incurable Cases	191,142
2071		£12,159,084

In the year 1907 there were 357 Institutions and Societies of which no particulars were available.

From the same source we gather (1) that each inhabitant of these islands only contributes (statistically and theoretically, of course) 2s. 9d. per annum—or ·634d. per week to the amelioration of the lot of his less fortunate fellows. (2) That in the year 1910 there were 230,542 in the workhouses, *i.e.* in a state of absolute destitution. Fact (2) is evidence that the voluntary system, admirable though it be in many ways, is still inadequate; and fact (1) that the individual is hardly doing his duty,—in other words, the charitable alone are doing what ought to be done by all.

[1] Burdett's *Hospitals and Charities*, 1910.

Mrs. Ward rightly looks to the State in these matters, she aims at the awakening of the State conscience—hence the earlier part of her social work is the work of propaganda. For this purpose she wrote *Marcella* and *Sir George Tressady*, while *Robert Elsmere*, though primarily a protest against the cramping effects of a too liberal and dogmatic religion, also lends its powerful aid in the great campaign against insanitation, defective housing, and the evils of unrestricted destitution.

An endeavour is herein made to show that the intense human sympathy which pervades these romances touched the hearts of the tens of thousands who read them, and so awoke in the national conscience that social instinct which had too long lain smothered under the storm-clouds of theological and religious controversy.

Should it occur to any one to ask the question, "Does England undoubtedly possess the instinct of Social Reform?" we have only to refer back to the statements made with regard to English charities in order to prove a national, though perhaps a muddle-headed, desire to relieve the suffering. Indeed our sympathy with the afflicted is not confined to these islands—its unbounded enthusiasm is universal, and has sometimes got us into trouble with other nations. Witness our interference in the case of the Balkan atrocities and in Armenia. But the sentiment had been allowed to get too expansive, it had to be concentrated and organised, and focused nearer home.

In *Marcella*, Mrs. Ward pointed out, in a manner that was much more effective than any political pamphlet, the cruelty of our Game Laws, and showed what an amount of unnecessary suffering they cause. There is no piece of writing in any of the author's books stronger than her description of the grief and devastation of the Hurd family—victims of these laws.

Jim Hurd, the husband, has killed—perhaps accidentally—a keeper, in one of his night poaching affrays, and Minta, his wife, is distractedly awaiting, fearing, the sentence of death. The first reference is to Marcella Boyce :—

"Now, as she walked along, wrapped in her plaid cape, her thought was one long tumultuous succession of painful or passionate images, interrupted none the less at times by those curious self-observing pauses of which she had always been capable. She had been sitting for hours beside Mrs. Hurd, with little Willie upon her knee. The mother, always anæmic and consumptive, was by now prostrate, the prey of a long-drawn agony peopled by visions of Jim alone and in prison —Jim on the scaffold with the white cap over his eyes—Jim in the prison coffin—which would rouse her shrieking from dreams which were the rending asunder of soul and body. Minta Hurd's love for the unhappy being who had brought her to this pass had been infinitely maternal. There had been a boundless pity in it, and the secret pride of a soul, which, humble and modest towards

all the rest of the world, yet knew itself to be the breath and sustenance, the indispensable aid of one other soul in the universe, and glorified accordingly. To be cut off now from all ministration, all comforting—to have to lie there like a log, imagining the moment when the neighbours should come in and say, ' It is all over—they have broken his neck—and buried him '—it was a doom beyond all even that her timid pessimist heart had ever dreamed. She had already seen him twice in prison, and she knew that she would see him again. She was to go on Monday, Miss Boyce said, before the trial began, and after, if they brought him in guilty, they would let her say good-bye. She was always thirsting to see him. But when she went, the prison surroundings paralysed her. Both she and Hurd felt themselves caught in the wheels of a great, relentless machine, of which the workings filled them with a voiceless terror. He talked to her spasmodically of the most incongruous things—breaking out sometimes with a glittering eye into a string of instances bearing on Westall's bullying and tyrannous ways. He told her to return the books Miss Boyce had lent him; but when asked if he would like to see Marcella he shrank and said no. Mr. Wharton was ' doin' capital ' for him; but she wasn't to count on his getting off. And he didn't know that he wanted to neither. Once she took Willie to see him. The child nearly died of the journey; and the father, ' though any one can see, miss, he's just sick for

'im,' would not hear of his coming again. Sometimes he would hardly kiss her at parting; he sat on his chair, with his great head dropped forward over his red hands, lost in a kind of animal lethargy. Westall's name always roused him. Hate still survived. But it made *her* life faint within her to talk of the murdered man—wherein she showed her lack of the usual peasant's realism and curiosity in the presence of facts of blood and violence. When she was told it was time for her to go, and the heavy door was locked behind her, the poor creature, terrified at the warder and the bare prison silences, would hurry away as though the heavy hand of this awful Justice were laid upon her too, torn by the thought of him she left behind, and by the remembrance that he had only kissed her once, and yet impelled by mere physical instinct towards the relief of Ann Mullin's rough face waiting for her—of the outer air and the free heaven." [1]

Could anything be finer? Note the poignant touches of the master hand, "infinitely maternal," "the secret pride of a soul," "incongruous things," "a kind of animal lethargy," "terrified . . . at the bare prison silences," "he had only kissed her once." Is it not clear that herein is demonstrated a power of psychological insight equal to that of the great French writers Mrs. Ward so justly admires? A person who can

[1] *Marcella* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1910), pp. 280, 281.

write with such terrible conviction must needs have the social instinct strongly developed.

Although the Game Laws have not been repealed, there now exists a general understanding that they shall be much less rigorously enforced, and trouble would certainly await any Justice of the Peace who should go outside this understanding and act vindictively.

In other directions Mrs. Ward's campaign—for as such we must regard it—has been more definitely successful. In the matter of the housing of the poor, for instance, who can forget her bitter cry—put into the mouth of Wharton?

"Why, he had seen dens—ay, on the best properties—not fit for the pigs that the farmers wouldn't let the labourers keep—where a man was bound to live the life of a beast, and his children after him." [1]

Or—

"Inside the hovel was miserable indeed. It belonged to that old and evil type which the efforts of the last twenty years have done so much all over England to sweep away; four mud walls, enclosing an oblong space about eight yards long, divided into two unequal portions by a lath and plaster partition, with no upper storey, a thatched roof, now entirely out of repair, and letting in the rain in several places, and a paved floor little better than the earth itself, so large

[1] *Marcella* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1910), p. 200.

and cavernous were the gaps between the stones." [1]

Or again (Elsmere *loquitur*) :—

"'Ugh!' he said with a sort of groan, 'That bedroom! Nothing gives one such a sense of the toughness of human life as to see a child recovering, actually recovering, in such a pestilential den! Father, mother, grown-up son, girl of thirteen, and grandchild, all huddled in a space just fourteen feet square. Langham!' and he turned passionately on his companion, 'what defence can be found for a man who lives in a place like Murewell Hall, and can take money from human beings for the use of a sty like that?'" [2]

With that poignant grief, mingled doubtless with a certain righteous indignation, must the writer of these words have marked the failure of the Report of the Royal Commission on Housing to stir up any feeling in the country.

Yet it was a strong Commission, representative of many of the best elements in the nation. That Prince of Wales, who later became King Edward VII., was a member and an assiduous attendant. Sir Charles Dilke was chairman, and among the most regular frequenters of the sittings were Cardinal Manning, the Marquis of Salisbury, Earl Brownlow, Earl Carrington, Sir Richard Cross, the Bishop of Bedford, and Mr. Goschen. The evidence produced, moreover, was startling,

[1] *Robert Elsmere* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1910), p. 201.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 320.

even alarming one would have thought. For instance, Lord Shaftesbury stated[1] that he had himself visited houses inhabited by women and children, where there were open cesspools not a foot below the boarding of the rooms. He had also seen the once famous Bermondsey Island where houses were built upon piles in a swamp, the only supply of water for all purposes being that over which the people were living, in which was deposited all the filth of the place.

Later, speaking of the wretchedness of these classes, Lord Shaftesbury's evidence is so remarkable that the Commissioners quote it in their Report verbatim. Witness the following sentences :—

" I remember that the Rector of Regent Street, Gordon Square, told me that in the whole of his district he did not believe there was a single family that had been there more than three months —they were always on the move. Look what happens. They go into these tenement houses ; they remain there a couple of months or three months ; they go out again, and are succeeded by another family ; they leave all their filth, nothing is cleared away. The other family come in, stay three months, and deposit their filth and off they go. It is perfectly impossible for these poor people, with the best intentions, to keep their houses clean. Their hearts are broken,

[1] Report of Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes. *Parliamentary Papers*, 1884–1885, vol. xxx. p. 9.

and they have not the means of doing it. They do not know how soon they will have to go; they are merely wanderers on the face of the earth. That migratory class is the most difficult one we have to deal with." [1]

The evidence as to overcrowding in London was nauseating :—

"A small house in Allen Street was occupied by thirty-eight persons, seven of whom lived in one room. In Northampton Street there was a case of nine persons in one room. In Summers Court, Holborn, there were two families in a room 12 feet by 8 feet." [2]

Nor were matters any better in the country.

"Mr. Samuel Pike gave evidence as to Dorset. There was a case of eleven persons, two parents and nine children, including a boy of nineteen and a girl of fifteen, occupying two small rooms. Similar evidence was given from the neighbouring county of Somerset." [3]

One would have thought that the bringing to light of such a state of things would have roused England, but the fact is that the British people do not read Parliamentary Reports, and little or nothing was done to remedy the evil. Governments are not prone to act unless impelled thereto by either the expressed will of the nation, or the force of vested interests. And in this case the force of vested interests lay in the hands of property

[1] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1884–1885, vol. xxx. p. 15.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 7. [3] *Ibid.* p. 5.

owners, who were not anxious to be made to put their houses in order.

Three years passed and then (in 1888) *Robert Elsmere* appeared. Something has already been said about the storm of religious controversy it raised, but the intense pathos of the account of Elsmere's experiences among the poor of Murewell had also its effect. People professing all kinds of religious creeds read the book, and many who were left unmoved by the theological doubts and difficulties raised, were infinitely stirred by the social problems brought to light. These people, largely of the middle classes, brought strong influence to bear on the Local Authorities, Town and Parish Councils. And this to some purpose, for during the year 1901 the following towns submitted to the Local Government Board schemes for the better housing of the working classes and received from them permission to demolish slums and rebuild according to the said schemes, namely:—Colne (42), Sheffield (59), Ilkeston (24), South Shields (160), Brighton (922), Barry (10), Manchester (1254), Bradford (8), Ashbourne (935), Bootle (24), West Ham (240), Morley (44), Salford (60). The figures beside the name of each town give the number of persons for whom improved accommodation was found, making a total of 2884 for the year.[1]

[1] Appendix to Report from the Joint Select Committee on Housing of the Working Classes. *Parliamentary Papers*, 1902, vol. v. p. 138.

So that within three years of the publication of *Robert Elsmere* we find nearly three thousand people have benefited by local legislation. An excellent beginning, but only a beginning, and the fire thus kindled had to be fanned and fed. In 1894 *Marcella* appeared, followed in 1896 by *Sir George Tressady*. And now the fire is steadily burning. From 1896 until this very year of grace 1912 there has been a steady improvement. Several Housing and Town-Planning Bills have been passed through Parliament, Garden Cities are springing up all around us, the municipalities of all the large towns now recognise it as one of their first duties to abolish slums, and to erect in their place airy and cleanly tenements at rentals within the capacity of even the poorest labourer.

There are not wanting, moreover, signs of an awakening of the clergy to the fact that something more than lip-service is required of them. The work of Canon Barnett at Toynbee Hall may be quoted in evidence. Here in the heart of one of the poorest districts of London he has gathered about him a community of enthusiastic young men, mostly from the Universities, pledged to devote a fixed portion of their leisure time to the personal investigation of the social conditions around them.

This is the kind of spirit, no doubt, which first led Mrs. Ward to take up social work in a definite form, by identifying herself with the Passmore Edwards Settlement;—had she acted under

French influence the tendency would have been rather to put pressure on the Government to do something.

But social work there was to be done, and Mrs. Ward appears to have been convinced of its need almost from the first. Her two first great romances—the two earlier ones (*Milly and Olly* and *Miss Bretherton*) must be regarded as immature—are full of the breath of a great yearning for the betterment of the lot of the working classes.

It is probably from the same great thinker-uncle that Mrs. Ward got her first ideas of that social reform which was destined later to play so great a part in her life, and to have so great an influence on the social conditions of her time. For very early in his work we find Arnold exclaiming :—

"We are all of us included in some religious organisation or other; we all call ourselves, in the sublime and aspiring language of religion which I have before noticed, *children of God.* Children of God;—it is an immense pretension!—and how are we to justify it? By the works which we do, and the words which we speak. And the work which we collective children of God do, our grand centre of life, our *city* which we have builded for us to dwell in, is London! London, with its unutterable external hideousness, and with its internal canker of *publice egestas, privatim opulentia,* to use the words which Sallust puts into

Cato's mouth about Rome,—unequalled in the world!" [1]

Here surely is to be found the germ which in after years bore such glorious fruit as the Passmore Edwards Settlement—that gem set in the midst of London's "unutterable hideousness"—that fine attempt to justify our "immense pretension" that we are indeed the children of God.

Arnold's excessive culture is such that he must needs veil the thought of the internal hideousness beneath a Latin name, but his niece writing twenty years later is restrained by no such fastidiousness—plain Anglo-Saxon serves her purpose better.

"Marcella's cheek flushed. 'The village water supply is a *disgrace*,' she said with low emphasis. 'I never saw such a crew of unhealthy, wretched-looking children in my life as swarm about those cottages. We take the rent, and we ought to look after them. I believe you could be *forced* to do something, papa—if the Local Authority were of any use.'" [2]

"'Talk of London, I never saw such sickly objects as there are in this village. Twelve shillings a week, and work about half the year! Oh, they *ought* to hate us! I try to make them,' cried Marcella, her eyes gleaming. 'They ought to hate all of us landowners, and the whole wicked

[1] *Culture and Anarchy* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1910), pp. 104, 105.

[2] *Marcella* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1910), p. 20.

system. It keeps them from the land which they ought to be sharing with us; it makes one man master, instead of all men brothers. And who is fit to be master? Which of us? Everybody is so ready to take charge of other people's lives, and then look at the result.' " [1]

And earlier in *Robert Elsmere*, we find the same ideas, the same enthusiasm for reform put into the words of the hero :—

" An angry red mounted in Robert's cheek."

" ' What isn't the matter with it? The houses, which were built on a swamp originally, are falling into ruin; the roofs, the drains, the accommodation per head, are all about equally scandalous. The place is harried with illness; since I came there has been both fever and diphtheria there. They are all crippled with rheumatism, but *that* they think nothing of; the English labourer takes rheumatism as quite in the day's bargain! And as to *vice*—the vice that comes of mere endless persecuting opportunity—I can tell you one's ideas of personal responsibility get a good deal shaken up by a place like this!" [2]

Yet Arnold had at least once faced the facts and felt just a little stirred, in his own cold, cultured way, by the spectacle of so much misery.

" ' I remember,' he says, ' only the other day, a good man looking with me upon a multitude of

[1] *Marcella* (London: T. Nelson & Son, 1910), p. 39.

[2] *Robert Elsmere* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1910), pp. 199, 200.

children who were gathered before us in one of the most miserable regions in London,—children eaten up with disease, half-sized, half-fed, half-clothed, neglected by their parents, without health, without home, without hope,—said to me: "The one thing really needful is to teach these little ones to succour one another, if only with a cup of cold water; but now, from one end of the country to the other, one hears nothing but the cry for knowledge, knowledge, knowledge!" And yet surely, so long as these children are there in these festering masses, without health, without home, without hope, and so long as their multitude is perpetually swelling, charged with misery they must still be for themselves, charged with misery they must still be for us, whether they help one another with a cup of cold water or no; and the knowledge how to prevent their accumulating is necessary, even to give their moral life and growth a fair chance!'"[1]

But if Arnold sowed the seed, it was others who tended and fostered the young plant. Mrs. Ward was in her twenty-sixth year when Herbert Spencer published his *Principles of Sociology*. A brain so active as hers, so eager to acquire fresh knowledge, can hardly have failed to read and absorb the theories set forth so brilliantly therein. Spencer's tracing, with infinite pains, of the transition of social ethics from the homogeneous

[1] *Culture and Anarchy* (London: T. Nelson & Sons 1910), pp. 353, 354.

and simple, to the heterogeneous and composite, must have fascinated a mind already deeply impressed with the work of Rousseau and Renan.

These had, years before, done their work in stirring the sympathies of their young devotee, and now, with the pressure of the duties of marriage and maternity somewhat relaxed, we find her eager energies striving in all directions to realise the ideals imbibed in youth, and preached in maturity.

We see her, Marcella-like, speaking at a meeting of the Women's Local Government Society and we hear her saying that " one of the most crying needs of England to-day is a larger supply of women on local governing bodies." And why? Because such bodies had to deal with all that grows most naturally out of household life and therefore concerns women as well as men—the provision of decent houses and decent sanitation. They had to endeavour, she said, by means of health visitors and sanitary inspectors, to help the people; to guard against the neglect of landlords and the carelessness of tenants. She urged that a fixed number of places should be reserved for women on Town and Borough Councils.

One seems to hear the echo of Marcella's cry :—

" The village water supply is a disgrace. I believe you could be forced to do something, papa, —*if the Local Authority were of any use.*" [1]

But her most important social work has been in connection with the Passmore Edwards Settle-

[1] *Marcella* (London : T. Nelson & Sons, 1910), p. 20.

ment—which might well be called the Humphry Ward Settlement, for if Mr. Passmore Edwards found the money it was Mrs. Ward who supplied the ideas. Or, indeed, it might fittingly be called the Robert Elsmere Settlement, for the whole scheme was outlined in that great romance :—

" 'Look here ! ' (Elsmere *loquitur*). And sitting down again on a sandhill overgrown with wild grasses and mats of sea-thistle, the poor pale reformer began to draw out the details of his scheme on its material side. Three floors of rooms brightly furnished, well lit and warmed ; a large hall for the Sunday lectures, concerts, entertainments, and story-telling ; rooms for the Boys' Club ; two rooms for women and girls, reached by a separate entrance ; a library and reading-room open to both sexes, well stored with books, and made beautiful by pictures ; three or four smaller rooms to serve as committee rooms and for the purpose of the Naturalist Club, which had been started in May on the Murewell plan ; and, if possible, a gymnasium." [1]

The personality of the man who made it possible for Mrs. Ward to carry out one of her dearest ambitions is not without significance. James Passmore Edwards was born in 1823 and was the son of a carpenter. In his autobiography, *A Few Footprints*, speaking of the house he lived in, he says :—

[1] *Robert Elsmere* (London : T. Nelson & Sons, 1910), p. 548.

"Two bedrooms at the back of the house had no direct window light, but only borrowed light from a small window between the two rooms, over the stairs. I mention this circumstance to recall the fact that during the early part of the last century almost everything consumed by the people was taxed, including the wood, glass, and other materials used in the production of windows, *and the windows as well.* One of the results of this state of things was that I, with one of my brothers, slept thousands of times in a small bedroom into which the light of heaven never directly entered. As with us, so with hundreds of thousands of others. The window tax alone assisted to enfeeble the British race. As with the window tax, so with hundreds of other taxes, including the tax on bread, which still more enfeebled the race, and which a partisan statesmanship would triumphantly reimpose, and thereby endanger the power and prosperity of the country. I well remember some of the blighting effects of the Corn Laws, when large numbers of the industrious poor of Cornwall ate barley bread, and many had not enough of that. The repeal of the Corn Laws and the introduction of a Free Trade era soon broadened and brightened national prospects." [1]

The iron had evidently entered his soul, and we can well imagine the zest and enthusiasm with which he would plunge into all Mrs. Ward's plans for betterment.

[1] *A Few Footprints* (London: Watts & Co., 1906), p. 4.

He had a troubled life, working now in a lawyer's office, now as a propagandist, now as a journalist, until he was about thirty-two years of age, when success began to come to him as manager and proprietor of the *Mechanic's Magazine* and the *Building News*. It was not, however, until twenty years later when he bought the *Echo* that he began to amass his fortune.

Three propagandist pamphlets issued by him made some stir at the time and serve to indicate the trend of his mentality, namely: *Intellectual Tollbars* (against "taxes on knowledge," *i.e.* on paper, on advertisements, on newspapers), *The Triple Curse* (against opium), and *The War: A Blunder and a Crime* (against the Crimean War). In his autobiography Mr. Passmore Edwards claims that history has proved him to have been right, for the tollbars have all been removed, the opium traffic has been crippled, and will soon have ceased, and, with regard to the War, Lord Salisbury said some years afterwards, in sporting phraseology, that we had "put our money on the wrong horse." [1]

This remarkable man founded and endowed no less than

26 Public Libraries.
9 Hospitals.
10 Homes (for children and for epileptics).
3 Art Galleries.
17 Other Institutions, which—like the Settle-

[1] *A Few Footprints* (London: Watts & Co., 1906), p. 38.

ment in Tavistock Place—it would be difficult to classify.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the man was his credo, which is given at length in *A Few Footprints*. It is well worth quoting :—

I BELIEVE

"I believe, with Shakespeare, that a divinity is shaping our ends, rough hew them as we will, and that 'Heaven hath a hand in all'; with Schiller, that 'Justice is the keystone of the world's wide arch, sustaining and sustained by all'; with Elizabeth Barrett Browning, that 'no lily-muffled hum of summer bee but finds some coupling with the spinning stars'; with Herbert Spencer, that 'amid the mysteries which become the more mysterious the more they are considered, there will remain the one absolute certainty, that man is ever in presence of an Infinite and Eternal Energy from which all things proceed'; with Mazzini, that 'the word Progress, unknown to antiquity, is destined henceforth to be a sacred word to Humanity, as in it is indicated an entire social, political, and religious transformation'; with Thomas Carlyle, 'that modern majesty consists in work. What a man can do is his greatest ornament, and he best consults his dignity by doing it'; with Victor Hugo, that 'between the government that does evil and the people who accept it there is a certain solidarity';

with Frederic Harrison, that 'man's morality towards the lower animals is a vital end and, indeed, a fundamental part of his morality towards his fellow-men'; with J. S. Mill, that 'we are entering upon an order of things in which justice will be the primary virtue, grounded on equal and sympathetic association, having its root no longer in the interest for self-protection, but in a cultivated sympathy, no one being left out, but an equal measure being extended to all'; with Emerson, that 'there will be a new Church founded . . . that will have heaven and earth for its beams and rafters, and service for symbol and illustration'; with Humboldt, that 'centuries are but seconds in the process of developing humanity'; with Longfellow, that 'affection never is wasted: if it enrich not the heart of another, its waters, returning back to the springs, shall find them full of refreshment'; with Spinoza, 'that the good human life lies not in the possession of things which for one man to possess is for the rest to lose, but rather in things which all can possess alike, and where one man's wealth promotes that of his neighbour'; with Ruskin, that 'that country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings, and that man is the richest who, having perfected the functions of his own life, has also the widest healthful influence over the lives of others'; and with Tennyson, who 'doubts not through the ages one increasing purpose runs, and the thoughts of men

are widened with the process of the suns'; and that 'the face of Death is turned towards the Sun of Life.'"[1]

Mrs. Ward, it will be observed, had for a co-adjutor a man as well read in philosophy and ethics as herself, and just as keen in the cause of social betterment; and it was when laying the foundation-stone of one of the Passmore Edwards Free Libraries (the one at Edmonton) that she made one of her most notable public pronouncements:—

"When we have all passed away," she said, "generations of English people, in and around London, and in the remote towns of beautiful Cornwall, where Mr. Passmore Edwards has erected so many public libraries, will still be entering the spiritual kingdom of knowledge and imagination, so opened up and widened. Free libraries are the great opportunities of our day and the days to come. Perhaps the majority of those who come to them will come for pleasure and rest, and small blame to them, for our modern life is a hard and hurrying one. Perhaps, through the library, the commencement of which they had just witnessed, some Edmonton boy in the future, gifted beyond his fellows, will produce a poem, a novel, or a history which will stir new and fruitful ideas in the English mind. There is always that chance, which should never be neglected or discouraged, because certain clever people, who had all the advantages that the endowments of the

[1] *A Few Footprints* (London: Watts & Co., 1909), pp. 67, 68.

English higher education can give, throw a little mud at free libraries. Youth is the time for reading and study as it is the time for that public and complete joy realised in the world of literature. Their whole after-life might be the richer for it, whether in their daily work or in business or in colonising—that great indispensable work of pushing forward and spreading the British Empire, which, unless we can infuse into a higher temper, a temper of justice and mercy, will more likely lead to national sorrow than national honour. We depend for the solution of our national difficulties, far more than most of us imagine, upon the humanising of English feeling and imagination, and it was in public libraries they will find the means of nurture and improvement." [1]

Let us see now what the combined efforts of these two remarkable personalities have done towards the "humanising of English feeling and imagination."

The buildings of the Settlement are situated in Tavistock Place on the edge of a closely-packed working-class neighbourhood, yet not out of touch with the business world, for Oxford Street is near; nor apart from wealth, for the great squares, Tavistock, Bedford, Woburn, although they have lost some of their pristine glory still retain the dignity of considerable middle-class prosperity. The Settlement consists of a House, providing accommodation for a Warden and seventeen

[1] *A Few Footprints* (London: Watts & Co., 1906), Appendix, p. 83.

residents, and a hall capable of holding five hundred people.

The building itself is simple, but full of charm and beauty—spacious, light, soft in colour and attractive in line. There are rooms for all purposes and of all shapes and sizes—class-rooms, lecture-rooms, dining-rooms, etc. The large kitchen is used for the teaching of practical domestic economy. In one room we find a crowd of children listening with rapt attention to one who is telling a story—it is the story of "Snow-white and Red Rose." In another room are bigger children being read to, from *Nicholas Nickleby*. In a third room we find a Shakespeare class. The dining-room is furnished with collapsible tables so that it may be used for concerts and entertainments.

In the evening, when the children have gone home to bed, the Settlement is used by men and women.

Then there is a Newspaper Class—suggested by Lord Morley. This is generally led by one of the Residents (who, by the way, are invariably men and women of birth and education, devoting their lives to the service of their less fortunate fellows). The subjects for discussion are chosen from the topics of the day—aviation, strikes, etc. Maps are brought out, histories consulted, and the whole matter thrashed out in a highly intelligent and educative manner.

The refining influence of music has not been

overlooked, and in the concert programmes are always to be found the names of some of the great masters—Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Brahms, Schubert, Grieg and Wagner.

Mr. John Morley (now Lord Morley)—author of the *Life of Gladstone* and of works on Rousseau, Voltaire and the Encyclopædists—at the ceremony of the opening of the Settlement, paid a just and well-deserved tribute to "that lady of so many gifts who must always be regarded as the Foundress of this Settlement—who, by the majestic wand of fiction, has raised from the ground a veritable palace, and has taught men and women, whose hearts may be glowing for personal service in social work, that in London they would find the nearest and the strongest claim."

Mrs. Humphry Ward, in acknowledging this tribute, said of Lord Morley that he represented "better than any living Englishman that union of familiarity with letters and familiarity with affairs (Lord Morley has held in his day many offices under Government) which would lead a man to sympathise with an institution whose main object is to bring books and the finer pleasures into the crowded life of London and its working world." From these words we shall be prepared to find that the motto of the Settlement is :—

"Man needs knowledge, not only for the sake of livelihood, but for the sake of life."

—doubtless Mrs. Ward's own device.

CHAPTER IV

RELIGION

THE term *religion*, it must be remarked, is popularly applied, as well to those "outward and visible signs" to which some creeds attach so great importance, as to that "inward and spiritual grace" which all creeds alike, and even those of no creed, recognise as something above and beyond our everyday life, with its often sordid aims and selfish considerations; yet capable withal of being so subtly blended with that life as to produce a type of personality that comes somewhere near to perfection.

Religion viewed from the purely human side might be defined as "man's supreme interest"; whoever has an absorbing interest may be said to have a religion. We often hear persons spoken of as "religiously" devoted to some object, "religiously" faithful to some cause, some ideal, some affection. There are those who have memories that are to them a "religion"—statesmen to whom the service of their country has been a "religion," reformers who give their

lives and fortunes in "religious" devotion to the service of some mission. Those who care for no one thing more than another, who have no enthusiasm, who are listless and cannot be conceived as rising to any height of self-devotion—these are properly the "irreligious" people of the world.

This broader theory, however, is not one that can safely be adopted in dealing with the matters under review; we must adhere to the general and popular definition.

Now Mrs. Ward is under no delusion as to the actual state of life in London from a religious point of view.

"Here," she says, "all that is most prosperous and intelligent among the working class holds itself aloof—broadly speaking—from all existing spiritual agencies, whether of Church or Dissent. Upon the genuine London artisan the Church has practically no hold whatever; and Dissent has nothing like the hold which it has on similar material in the great towns of the North. Towards religion in general the prevailing attitude is one of indifference tinged with hostility. 'Eight hundred thousand people in South London, of whom the enormous proportion belong to the working class, and among them, Church and Dissent nowhere—*Christianity not in possession.*' Such is the estimate of an Evangelical of our day; and similar laments come from all parts of the capital. The Londoner is, on the whole, more conceited, more prejudiced, more given over to

crude theorising, than his north-country brother, the mill-hand, whose mere position, as one of a homogeneous and tolerably constant body, subjects him to a continuous discipline of intercourse and discussion. Our popular religion, broadly speaking, means nothing to him. He is sharp enough to see through its contradictions and absurdities; he has no dread of losing what he never valued; his sense of antiquity, of history, is *nil*; and his life supplies him with excitement enough without the stimulants of 'otherworldliness.' Religion has been, on the whole, irrationally presented to him, and the result on his part has been an irrational breach with the whole moral and religious order of ideas." [1]

This was written in 1887–88, but that it is equally true to-day we have the witness of no less an authority than his Grace the Bishop of London himself.

Speaking at the Church Congress on Oct. 3, 1911.

"Why," he asked, "has the Church not more influence than it has upon the rising democracy to-day?

"Why has organised labour so little to say to organised Christianity as a whole?

"Thousands believed," he said, "that there was a possibility of equality of opportunity for all, that the grinding poverty to be seen in great cities was unnecessary, and should come to an end, and

[1] *Robert Elsmere* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1910), pp. 453, 454.

they looked forward with hope to a day when each child should have a chance, and no one should be, to use a terrible phrase, 'damned into the world.' Thousands, in short, believed that literally a Kingdom of God was at hand; they were set on seeing the beginning of a heaven on earth. It was a modest enough Kingdom of God which they expected. They did not crave for large mansions or princely incomes, but for more time to think, and greater leisure from toil, and a living wage, and a help towards being independent in old age, instead of going to the workhouse, and co-operation as the ruling motive of life and work, instead of cut-throat competition, and peace among nations, instead of war.

This was the beautiful dream which was at the bottom of the Labour movement in this country. He noticed with thankfulness that the Labour movement in this country was avowedly and definitely religious, as witness the addresses in Labour week by eleven Labour members of Parliament, and the participation of them, and others in Christian work.

It went far to bear out the contention of Bishop Creighton, that England was still much the most religious nation in the world. Why did scarcely any of these men belong to the Church of England? Why, in the recent strike, had the Church little influence? Why did they not turn to the Church, which was founded two thousand years ago, to hold up their just ideal to the world?

Why were they not looking more than they were to the historic Church of Jesus Christ for sympathy, guidance and advice? He believed the first reason was that, consciously or unconsciously, the clergy were influenced still by class prejudice and that this spoilt the real sympathy which they wished to give. The second reason was that the toiling millions had no interest in the controversies of the two rival camps of High Church and Low Church. There was nothing wrong, in his opinion, with the Church or its sacraments, its ministry, or its ceremonial; that fatal class prejudice and caste feeling must be laid aside and for ever." [1]

During his residence in the East End the Bishop of London had special opportunities of studying the conditions under which the working classes live, and he is painfully impressed by the wide gulf that divides Labour from the Church of England. The Bishop's warm sympathy with the demand of the workers for a living wage and more leisure is what we should have expected from a man with his fervid zeal for social reform. He is not the only Bishop who is full of enthusiasm for humanity. At the present day the episcopate of the Church of England contains more Bishops who are genuinely sympathetic to the working classes than it ever contained before, yet the Church itself, frigid and aloof, is less touched with feeling for Labour than in the days of Charles Kingsley and Frederic Denison Maurice. The

[1] As reported in *The Times*, October 4, 1911.

Bishop of London thinks that the failure of the Church to influence the rising tide of democracy is due to class prejudice. No doubt this is the main reason. May it not also be due in some degree to the absorption of many of the clergy in barren ecclesiastical controversies for which the toiling masses do not disguise their contempt? While sorrowing over the isolation of his own Church, Dr. Winnington Ingram takes comfort in the fact that in Great Britain the Labour movement is "avowedly religious." It would be more correct to put it in the negative, and say that the British Labour movement is not avowedly irreligious. That is a characteristic that differentiates it from organised Labour on the Continent. Many British Labour leaders are lay preachers, associated with really democratic Churches like the Primitive Methodists. And even when they do not attend places of worship, the British working classes are notably free from those anti-Christian prejudices that are so marked among the industrials in France and Germany. Our people have little love for clericalism, but they remain *au fond* essentially religious. This fact makes their estrangement from the Churches the more surprising, and suggests that the fault is much more in the ministers of religion than in the working classes.

What was true in 1887–88 is still true, then, in the main, yet Mrs. Ward might perhaps be willing to make some concessions in view of the

activities of the Nonconformists of to-day. The Rev. Dr. Clifford, the Rev. F. B. Meyer, and the Rev. R. J. Campbell (the founder of the Liberal Social Movement), each, with his Church as centre, throws out a network of agencies of the Elsmere type, which have had a marked effect on the social and political life of the past decade. We say "political life" advisedly, for the Nonconformist is nothing if he is not a politician. He it is, in fact, who has realised to some extent Mrs. Ward's ideal of practical Christianity, with this difference, perhaps, that he works for the betterment of himself and his fellows by means of political pressure, whereas our author's heroes and heroines have given personal service to a greater extent.

But religion, if it is to have a hand and a voice in the change, must be practical, and if we leave for a moment the consideration of the individual and "think imperially" rather than parochially we shall see that in order to be practical, religion must be political.

Take, for instance, the question of Sabbath observance. That reasonable Sunday recreation has Mrs. Ward's sympathy may be safely deduced from the following excerpt :—

"Langham was punctual, and Robert carried him off first to see the Sunday cricket, which was in full swing." [1]

[1] *Robert Elsmere* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1910), p. 177.

The author does not deign to discuss the matter; she casually mentions it as being the most natural thing in the world; and no doubt it would be so to a mind so free from all superstition and cant as Elsmere's. But think of the shock this sentence must have produced on an England which still permitted the Amendment Act and the Remission of Penalties Act to remain on the statute book as evidence of the vitality of those two earlier Acts of Charles II. and George III.!—an England which only a few years later (1905) produced a large body of support for Lord Avebury's Bill to increase the penalties on Sunday trading. Happily there are not wanting signs of the decay of this particular superstition. The National Sunday League now holds twenty-eight concerts in the theatres and music-halls of Greater London every Sunday evening from October to May, and during the summer months runs countless excursions on Sunday to all parts of the kingdom.

The prejudice against games played publicly, curiously enough, still holds, but many thousands of games of tennis are played in private gardens; and on nearly all of the two thousand links in England golf is played on Sundays, though many Clubs disallow the employment of caddies on that day—doubtless on the ground that it might perchance be preventing boys or men from duly performing their religious exercises.

Looking indoors, we also see great changes in

London, but it must be noted that this movement has only in a modified degree spread to the provinces. In London, all the great restaurants open in the evening from six o'clock till eleven o'clock; hundreds of cinematograph shows are to be found packed with people seeking a little distraction after the toil and moil of the week.

All this amounts almost to a revolution as compared with the mournful Sundays of 1887 when Mrs. Ward was writing *Robert Elsmere*, and we can well suppose that no one appreciates the change more than the author herself, but in order to accomplish the revolution political pressure and action has been ever necessary.

* * * * * *

A widespread tendency like the Modernist movement could hardly have escaped the notice of so keen a student of religion as Mrs. Ward, and she has recently published a romance, *The Case of Richard Meynell*, with the object of arresting the attention of the public, and of directing it towards the drama of religious revolution which she believes to be actually proceeding to-day within the national Church.

But it seems possible that she has somewhat underestimated the amount of indifference and apathy that have been slowly and surely creeping over the masses in the country with regard to things religious. The trend of modern scientific thought towards the psychological aspect of religion must always be of interest within the circles of

intellectualism, but it is questionable whether the matters dealt with are not too advanced in point of time, to take hold of the populace.

For the book is a forecast—a forecast of what may, and probably will, happen in England when the Modernists and the orthodox in the Established Church finally come to grips. Incidentally it is an attempt to show that the faith of the Modernist has its comfort for the death-bed and for the crises of this life, just as well as had the older interpretations of Christianity,—it looks, in fact, a decade perhaps, ahead of the times.

In the person of the hero, we have Robert Elsmere *redivivus*, in a new garb, ultra-modern in thought, and living in a theological *milieu* of to-morrow, rather than of to-day. The position of thought is similar, but with this difference—that instead of conceiving it to be his duty to leave the Church as Elsmere did, Meynell decides to remain in it:—

"We have come to fighting," he repeated, "and fighting means blows. Moreover, the fight is beginning to be equal. Twenty years ago—in Elsmere's time—a man who held his views or mine could only go. But the distribution of forces, the lie of the field, is now altogether changed. *I* am not going till I am turned out; and there will be others with me. The world wants a heresy trial, and it is going to get one this time." [1]

[1] *The Case of Richard Meynell* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1911), p. 13.

For in the interval between Elsmere's time and Meynell's, Mrs. Ward believes that the nation has come over to the views of the Higher Criticism, namely, that "miracles do not happen" (as Arnold said), and that the central figure of the Gospel narrative must be viewed solely in the light of history.

If, therefore, the Church of England is to be and remain national in any sense, room must be found within its precincts for these Modernists.[1]

But our author herself has stated the case infinitely better than any words of ours could convey it.

"There"—his (Meynell's) voice was low and rapid—"*there* is the goal! a new *happiness*:—

[1] Dicey remarks apropos:—

"Clergymen, it is true, still subscribe to, and are supposed to be bound, in some very indefinite sense, by the doctrine of the Thirty-Nine Articles. But the clergy of the Church of England in practice enjoy the right to express their opinions on all matters of religion and theology with nearly as much freedom as the laity. Not only upon Biblical history but upon doctrines which have often been supposed to be the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. Preachers whom every man respects may utter criticism which, in the days of Dr. Arnold, would hardly have been whispered by a minister of the Church of England to his most intimate friend, and which in 1860 would have amazed, if not scandalised, the authors of *Essays and Reviews*, and might well have given rise to proceedings in the Ecclesiastical Courts." *Law and Opinion in England* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1905), p. 435.

to be reached through a new comradeship—a freer and yet intenser fellowship. We want to say to our fellow-men—'Cease from groping among ruins!—from making life and faith depend upon whether Christ was born at Bethlehem or at Nazareth, whether he rose or did not rise, whether Luke or some one else wrote the Third Gospel, whether the Fourth Gospel is history or poetry. The life-giving force is *here* and *now*! It is burning in your life and mine—as it burnt in the life of Christ. Give all you have to the flame of it—let it consume the chaff and purify the gold. Take the cup of cold water to the thirsty, heal the sick, tend the dying, and feel it thrill within you—the ineffable, the immortal life! Let the false miracle go!—the true has grown out of it, up from it, as the flower from the sheath. Ah! but then'—he drew himself up unconsciously; his tone hardened—"we turn to the sons of tradition, and we say, 'We too must have our rights in what the past has built up, the past has bequeathed—as well as you! Not for you alone, the institutions, the buildings, the arts, the traditions, that the Christ-life has so far fashioned for itself. They who made them are our fathers, no less than yours,—give us our share in them! we claim it! Give us our share in the Cathedrals and Churches of our country—our share in the beauty and majesty of our ancestral Christianity. The men who led the rebellion against Rome in the sixteenth century claimed the *plant* of English Catholicism.

"We are our fathers' sons, and these things are *ours*!" they said, as they looked at Salisbury and Winchester. We say the same—with a difference. Give us the rights and the citizenship that belong to us! But do not imagine that we want to attack yours. In God's name, follow your own forms of faith,—but allow us ours also—within the common shelter of the common Church. We are children of the same God—followers of the same Master. Who made you judges and dividers over us? You shall not drive us into the desert any more. A new movement of revolt has come—an hour of upheaval—and the men with it.'" [1]

There is no Gladstone now to be astonished by a theological novel, to the point of reviewing it into fame, neither does Mrs. Ward's work any longer require such adventitious aid; and moreover, the figure of the heretic in the pulpit has long since ceased to make even the man in the pew quiver.

Theological hatred is, of course, not yet dead, but the Modernist Richard Meynell of the present day would meet with none of the wild beast fury that a clergyman of similar ideas would have had to contend with twenty or thirty years ago. And for that reason the drama of Richard Meynell is less engrossing than the drama of Robert Elsmere; but, on the other hand, it has the trill of anticipation which the earlier romance, of course, had not.

In essentials, then, the two books have an

[1] *The Case of Richard Meynell* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1911), pp. 72, 73.

identical aim; they champion the cause of Modernism, which our author defines as :—

"The attempt of the modern spirit, acting religiously, to refashion Christianity, not outside, but *inside* the warm limits of the ancient churches." [1]

In her view, Liberal Christianity bases its appeal on the grounds that religion, like science, requires continual adjustment to the needs of each particular epoch, and she finds that the conditions of thought have entirely changed since she wrote *Robert Elsmere*. Or as Meynell is made to say—speaking to Elsmere's daughter :—

"Ah, if your father had but lived! He died his noble death twenty years ago—think of the difference between then and now! Then the Broad Church movement was at an end. All that seemed so hopeful, so full of new life in the 'seventies had apparently died down. Stanley, John Richard Green, Hugh Pearson were dead; Jowett was an old man of seventy; Liberalism within the Church hardly seemed to breathe; the judgment in the Voysey case—as much a defiance of modern knowledge as any Papal Encyclical!—though people had nearly forgotten it, had yet in truth brought the whole movement to a stand. All *within* the gates seemed lost. Your father went out into the wilderness, and there, amid everything that was poor and mean and new, he laid down his life. But we!—we are no longer alone, or helpless.

[1] *The Case of Richard Meynell* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1911), p. 69.

The tide has come up to the stranded ship—the launching of it depends now only on the faithfulness of those within it." [1]

The times that were then not ready are in Mrs. Ward's view now ripe for him. Yes, ripe for Elsmere perhaps, but are they ripe for Meynell? It is doubtful.

Briefly, the story is this:—Meynell is the Rector of a large mining village in the Midlands. He embraces Modernism, and there is an attempt made to oust him from his living. He heads a great movement of revolt, and finds his justification in the astonishingly large number of clergy and their congregations who rally at once to his support. A successful action is brought against him in the Court of Arches; but he has lit a flame throughout the land which will burn for many a long day, and the story leaves him with only the beginning of the fight completed.

Into this drama of religious controversy Mrs. Ward has woven, with her usual skill, a story of secular interest.

The Rector, who is no mere lay figure for the uttering of advanced opinions, but a very human and lovable personality, becomes involved in an ugly scandal. Honour forbids him to clear himself at the expense of another, and that other a woman; and the false story, in the hands of an unscrupulous opponent, goes far towards wrecking the Cause—*i.e.* the cause of Modernism.

[1] *The Case of Richard Meynell*, p. 69.

In this, the secular warp in the texture of the novel, there are four links with the *Elsmere* of 1888—namely, Catherine, Elsmere's widow; Mary, his daughter; Hugh Flaxman, who was of such great help to Elsmere in the founding of his Brotherhood; and Rose, Flaxman's wife, Catherine's sister.

Here our author has drawn a parallel between the days of the Reformation and the present time. Just as the Reformers seized what Mrs. Ward calls the "plant"—the cathedrals, churches, and revenues—of the Ancient Faith, so too have the Modernists a right to the use of the moulds in which the religion of England has always been cast:—

"'All that we ask' (says Meynell to his Bishop) 'is that the Church should recognise existing facts—that organisation should shape itself to reality. In our eyes, Christendom is divided to-day—or is rapidly dividing itself—into two wholly new camps. The division between Catholic and Protestant is no longer the supreme division; for the force that is rising affects both Protestant and Catholic equally. Each of the new divisions has a philosophy and a criticism of its own; each of them has an immense hold on human life, though Modernism is only now slowly realising and putting out its power. Two camps!—two systems of thought! both of them, *Christian* thought. Yet one of them, one only, *is in possession*—of the churches, the forms, the institutions;

the other is everywhere knocking at the gates. "Give us our portion!" we say—"in Christ's name." But *only our portion*! We do not dream of dispossessing the old—it is the last thing, even, that we desire. But for the sake of souls now wandering and desolate, we ask to live side by side with the old—in brotherly peace, in equal right—sharing what the past has bequeathed! Yes, even the loaves and fishes!—they ought to be justly divided out like the rest. But, above all, the powers, the opportunities, the trials, the labours of the Christian Church!' 'In other words, so far as the English Church is concerned, you propose to reduce us within our own borders to a peddling confusion of sects, held together by the mere physical link of our own buildings and our endowments!' said the Bishop, as he straightened himself in his chair." [1]

An interesting feature of this last book, from the view-point stated herein, is that Mrs. Ward has now decided to recognise the fact that the Nonconformist exists, and has some power:—

"'Do you see who it was that protected Darwen from the roughs outside his church?' he said presently.

"Brathay looked up.

"'A party of Wesleyans?—class-leaders? Yes, I saw. Oh! Darwen has always been on excellent terms with the Dissenters!'

"'Meynell too,' said the professor. 'That of

[1] *The Case of Richard Meynell*, p. 104.

course is their game. Meynell has always gone for the inclusion of the Dissenters.' " [1]

(Darwen is one of Meynell's adherents.)

It must not be supposed for one moment (as has already been proclaimed in Chapter II.) that any particular sympathy with the Nonconformist is intended to be conveyed herein, but it has been felt all along that Mrs. Ward has almost ignored his existence, and that this omission constitutes a blemish in her work.

But it has been impossible for any thinker to live in England through the past six years—to have passed through three general elections—without becoming vitally aware of the strength of modern Nonconformity, and Mrs. Ward is evidently no exception:—

"The effect of the movement," she says, "on the Dissenters—on that half" (here is an admission of strength, at last!) "of religious England which stands outside the National Church, where 'grace' takes the place of authority and Bishops are held to be superfluities incompatible with the pure milk of the Word—was in many respects remarkable. The majority of the Wesleyan Methodists had thrown themselves strongly on to the side of the orthodox party in the Church; but among the Congregationalists and Presbyterians there was visible a great ferment of opinion and a great cleavage of sympathy; while among the Primitive Methodists, a body founded on the

[1] *The Case of Richard Meynell*, p. 173.

straitest tenets of Bible worship, yet interwoven, none the less, with the working-class life of England and Wales, and bringing day by day the majesty and power of religion to bear upon the acts and consciences of plain, poor, struggling men, there was visible a strong and definite current of acquiescence in Modernist ideas; which was inexplicable, till one came to know that among Meynell's friends at Upcote there were two or three Primitive local preachers who had caught fire from him, and were now active members of his Church Council, and ardent though persecuted missionaries to their own body.

"Meanwhile the Unitarians—small and gallant band!—were like persons standing on tiptoe before an opening glory. In their isolated and often mistaken struggle, they had felt themselves for generations stricken with chill and barrenness; their blood now began to feel the glow of new kinships, the passion of large horizons. So, along the banks of some slender and much-hindered stream, there come blown from the nearing sea prophetic scents and murmurs, and one may dream that the pent water knows at last the when and the whither of its life." [1]

(This last remarkable paragraph would seem to lend colour to the report already referred to, to the effect that Mrs. Ward's sympathies, if not indeed her actual allegiance, are with the body of Nonconformists known as Unitarians.)

[1] *The Case of Richard Meynell*, p. 362.

If the Church is to be national, our author argues (and incidentally she gives us a noteworthy definition of the phrase "National Church" —"a nation, that is, in its spiritual aspect," p. 256), it must be prepared to contain Meynell and his followers, no matter which of the sections of Christianity they belong to. Here from the controversial side lies the weakness of the book, for it contains only a half-truth. True it is that the tendencies of the age do not fit the ancient institutions, yet is it conceivable that the latter-day followers of Wesley (let us say) would ever band themselves together in support of a creed that emanated originally from the German schoolmen?

And further, Mrs. Ward has overlooked the fact that the Modernist movement of to-day is itself split into two factions, the one seeing the Founder of Christianity as a gradually deified man; the other as a gradually humanised conception of divinity. Modern theology, in fact, is moving away from mediæval history to the study of comparative religion and towards the investigation of the unknown powers of the human organism. The newest leaders of to-day are not Harnack or Loisy or Tyrrell, but rather Professor William James, M. Bergson, and Sir Oliver Lodge—students of psychology rather than of written documents.

And Mrs. Ward herself is not altogether unconscious of this:—

"'You think' (says Norham, the Home Secretary, to Meynell), 'you think you can take what you like of a great historical religion and leave the rest—that you can fall back on its presuppositions, and build it anew. But the presuppositions themselves are all crumbling! "God!" "Soul," "free-will," "immortality," —even "human identity,"—is there one of the old fundamental notions that still stands, unchallenged? What are we in the eyes of modern psychology but a world of automata—dancing to stimuli from outside?'" [1]

Touching, for a moment, on the rumour that Mrs. Ward is a member of the Unitarian body, it can only be said that it is doubtful whether she has in any way identified herself with this particular creed. One imagines that a mind so thoroughly latitudinarian would hardly bear the bonds of any narrow dogma, and such creed as is to be found stated or implied throughout her work is eminently non-sectarian.

One of Mrs. Ward's claims, in fact, on our enthusiasm is her remarkable freedom from bigotry. To her all sects and creeds are good if only they tend to the mental, moral, and physical betterment of their adherents. In dealing with the many religious formulæ with which this country is infested, and however profoundly one may deplore their existence, there is after all only one standard of judgment that the true latitu-

[1] *The Case of Richard Meynell*, p. 256.

dinarian can apply equally to all; and it is this: —Whenever a system of religion meets with a response from numbers of people, be they few or many, it is safe to assume that it offers something which they either need or think they need. The wise man, the man in search of Truth for Truth's sake, will take care to distinguish carefully between the mass of exaggeration with which the system may be overweighted, and look carefully to the root principle which distinguishes it from other systems. Whatever the modicum of truth in Christian Science, for example, however marked its paradox, its very existence is at least a protest against that most atheistic of all conceptions of life, that conception which has been fed by the Churches, who have taught and practised an artificial separation of life into the sacred and secular, the division of a vast grand whole into two definite and limited entities. True, this conception is probably only a phase, and a phase that is already beginning to pass, but it would appear that certain recent reported discoveries in the direction of concentration—such as the alleged link between the Unitarians and the Jesuits—will do much to hasten the passing, or even to promote the much-vaunted, and devoutly-to-be-hoped-for, reunion of Christendom.

As to the personal *credo* of our author, it has not been possible to meet with anything in her work that could be called a definite pronounce-

ment, yet the facts may well be deduced from *Robert Elsmere.* Let us see if something in the nature of a creed can be constructed therefrom :—

" ' *Do I believe in God?* Surely, surely! " Though He slay me yet will I trust Him ! " *Do I believe in Christ?* Yes—in the teacher, the martyr, the symbol to us Westerns of all things heavenly and abiding, the image and pledge of the invisible life of the spirit—with all my soul and all my mind !

" ' *But in the Man-God,* the Word from Eternity —in a wonder-working Christ, in a risen and ascended Jesus, in the living Intercessor and Mediator for the lives of His doomed brethren ?

" ' Every human soul in which the voice of God makes itself felt, enjoys, equally with Jesus of Nazareth, the divine sonship, and " *miracles do not happen !* " ' "—Elsmere *loquitur,* p. 352.

" ' I often lie here wondering at the way in which men become the slaves of some metaphysical word—*personality,* or *intelligence,* or what not ! What meaning can they have as applied to *God* ? Herbert Spencer is quite right. We no sooner attempt to define what we mean by a personal God than we lose ourselves in labyrinths of language and logic. But why attempt it at all ? I like that French saying : " Quand on me demande ce que c'est que Dieu, je l'ignore ; quand on ne me le demande pas, je le sais très-bien ! " No, we cannot realise Him in words—we can only live in Him, and die to Him ! ' "—Elsmere *loquitur,* p. 575.

"'It is the education of God. Do not imagine it will put you farther from Him! He is in criticism, in science, in doubt, so long as the doubt is a pure and honest doubt, as yours is. He is in all life, in all thought. The thought of man, as it has shaped itself in institutions, in philosophies, in science, in patient critical work, or in the life of charity, is the one continuous revelation of God! Look for Him in it all; see how, little by little, the Divine indwelling force, using as its tools—but *merely* as its tools!—man's physical appetites and conditions, has built up conscience and moral life; think how every faculty of the mind has been trained in turn to take its part in the great work of faith upon the visible world! Love and imagination built up religion; shall reason destroy it? No! reason is God's, like the rest! Trust it—trust Him! The leading-strings of the past are dropping from you; they are dropping from the world, not wantonly nor by chance, but in the providence of God. Learn the lesson of your own pain,—learn to seek God, not in any single event of past history, *but in your own soul*,—in the constant verifications of experience, in the life of Christian love. Spiritually you have gone through the last wrench. I promise it you! You being what you are, nothing can cut this ground from under your feet. Whatever may have been the forms of human belief, *faith*, the faith which saves, has always been rooted here! All things change—creeds and

philosophies and outward systems — but God remains!'"—Grey *loquitur*, pp. 345, 346.

"'But what we *stand* to gain is a new social bond,' was the flashing answer, 'a new compelling force in man and in society. Can you deny that the world wants it? What are you economists and sociologists of the new type always pining for? Why, for that diminution of the self in man which is to enable the individual to see the *world's* ends clearly, and to care not only for his own but for his neighbour's interests, which is to make the rich devote themselves to the poor, and the poor bear with the rich. If man only *would*, he *could*, you say, solve all the problems which oppress him. It is man's will which is eternally defective, eternally inadequate. Well, the great religions of the world are the stimulants by which the power at the root of things has worked upon this sluggish instrument of human destiny. Without religion you cannot make the will equal to its tasks. Our present religion fails us; we must, we will have another!'" —Elsmere *loquitur*, p. 548.

"'However, I don't imagine we should call ourselves a church! Something much humbler will do, if you choose ever to make anything of these suggestions of mine. "Association," "Society," "Brotherhood," what you will! But always, if I can persuade you, with something in the name, and everything in the body itself, to show that for the members of it life rests still,

as all life worth having has everywhere rested, on *trust* and *memory*!—*trust* in the God of experience and history; *memory* of that God's work in man, by which alone we know Him and can approach Him. Well, of that work—I have tried to prove it to you a thousand times—Jesus of Nazareth has become to *us*, by the evolution of circumstance the most moving, the most efficacious of all types and epitomes. We have made our protest—we are daily making it—in the face of society, against the fictions and overgrowths which at the present time are excluding him more and more from human love. But now, suppose we turn our backs on negation, and have done with mere denial! Suppose we throw all our energies into the practical building of a new house of faith, the gathering and organising of a new Company of Jesus!'"—Elsmere *loquitur*, pp. 530, 531.

And again, in *Helbeck of Bannisdale*:—

"'Religion? All religion need not be as Alan Helbeck's. There was religion as the Friedlands understood it—a faith convinced of God, and of a meaning of human life, trusting the "larger hope" that springs out of the daily struggle of conscience, and the garnered experience of feeling. Both in Friedland and his wife there breathed a true spiritual dignity and peace.'"—Laura Fountain, *soliloq.*).

From these extracts there may be deduced with some accuracy the metaphysical factor of Mrs. Ward's faith; the Passmore Edwards' Settlement

and her work there give us the other, the practical factor.

EDUCATION

Mrs. Ward has given us a graphic description of one aspect, at any rate, of education in or about the year 1866. Speaking of Marcella, she writes :—

" In her home life she had been an average child of the quick and clever type,[1] with average faults. But something in the bare, ugly rooms, the discipline, the teaching, the companionship of Miss Frederick's Cliff House School for Young Ladies transformed little Marcella Boyce for the time being into a demon. She hated her lessons, though, when she chose, she could do them in a hundredth part of the time taken by her companions ; she hated getting up in the wintry dark, and her cold ablutions with some dozen others in the comfortless lavatory ; she hated the meals in the long schoolroom, where, because twice meat was forbidden, and twice pudding allowed, she invariably hungered fiercely for more mutton and scorned her second course, making a sort of dramatic story to herself out of Miss Frederick's tyranny and her own thwarted appetite, as she sat black-browed and brooding in her place. She was not a favourite with her companions,

[1] It is difficult to refrain from making the suggestion that this excerpt is mainly autobiographic.

and she was a perpetual difficulty and trouble to her perfectly well-intentioned schoolmistress. The whole of her first year was one continual series of sulks, quarrels, and revolts.

"Perhaps her blackest days were the days she spent occasionally in bed, when Miss Frederick, at her wits' end, would take advantage of one of the child's perpetual colds to try the effect of a day's seclusion and solitary confinement, administered in such a form that it could do her charge no harm, and might, she hoped, do her good. 'For I do believe a great part of it is liver or nerves! No child in her right senses could behave so,' she would declare to the mild and stout French lady who had been her partner for years, and who was more inclined to befriend and excuse Marcella than any one else in the house—no one exactly knew why.

"Now the rule of the house when any girl was ordered to bed with a cold was, in the first place, that she should not put her arms outside the bedclothes—for if you were allowed to read and amuse yourself in bed, you might as well be up; that the housemaid should visit the patient in the early morning with a cup of senna-tea, and at long and regular intervals throughout the day with beef-tea and gruel; and that no one should come to see and talk with her, unless, indeed, it were the doctor, quiet being in all cases of sickness the first condition of recovery, and the natural schoolgirl in Miss Frederick's persuasion being

more or less inclined to complain without cause, if illness were made agreeable.

"For some fourteen hours, therefore, on these days of durance Marcella was left almost wholly alone, nothing but a wild mass of black hair, and a pair of roving, defiant eyes in a pale face showing above the bed-clothes whenever the housemaid chose to visit her—a pitiable morsel, in truth, of rather forlorn humanity. For though she had her moments of fierce revolt, when she was within an ace of throwing the senna-tea in Martha's face, and rushing downstairs in her night-gown to denounce Miss Frederick in the midst of an astonished schoolroom, something generally interposed—not conscience, it is to be feared, or any wish to 'be good,' but only an aching, inmost sense of childish loneliness and helplessness; a perception that she had indeed tried everybody's patience to the limit, and that these days in bed represented crises which must be borne with, even by such a rebel as Marcie Boyce." [1]

We have gone forward somewhat since those days, but much remains still to be done. Education still looms large in politics, and more than one Education Bill has been wrecked on the rocks of religious difficulties during the past decade, so that Governments are beginning to fear, and to delay dealing with, this vexed and vexatious question.

Now it can hardly be contended that our scheme

[1] *Marcella* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1909), p. 405.

—if indeed there can be said to be a scheme—of national education is anything approaching perfection.

And one of the chief charges against the system is that it takes no thought of the period—that fateful period in the life of boy or girl—between leaving the elementary school, at the age of fourteen or thereabouts, and the time when the child becomes self-supporting—at, say, the age of eighteen.

Mrs. Ward has thoroughly recognised this difficulty, and a good deal of the work of the Settlement in Tavistock Place has been designed so as to meet it. And she has thought also of the younger children, for in connection with the Settlement there is a Vacation School.

This idea Mrs. Ward borrowed from the United States, but it has taken root in England. The first Vacation School was held at the Settlement in 1902. The idea was to give school children a joyous holiday—something better than listless roaming about. The children of the poor—and indeed many others—cannot amuse themselves; they suffer from a kind of childish ennui, and long for the return of the normal school days. The Vacation School seeks to satisfy the childish hunger for occupation, by setting something definite to do—seeks to care for their physical well-being by carefully organised exercises—seeks to show children that getting to know and learning to do are in themselves true pleasures—seeks to afford

joy to those whom poverty deprives of the pleasure of the country and the sea.

The curriculum is all-embracing:—Manual training, including woodwork for the older boys; housewifery and cooking for the older girls (cooking twice a week for boys also); singing; gymnastics, including boxing for the older boys; musical drill and physical exercises; story-telling (observe the persistence of the Elsmere idea); clay-modelling; dancing; nature-study from life; botany and zoology; brush-work and drawing; dramatics—the pieces prepared during the course are performed before the whole school on breaking-up day; needlework — chiefly dolls' clothes; basket-work and cane-weaving; lantern story-telling; ambulance work and nursing—even to washing and dressing a baby; swimming—taught to both boys and girls. As many as possible of these lessons are given in the Settlement garden—a charming shady spot, though necessarily small. The youngest children are separated into two classes for kindergarten; stories; building-games; paper-folding; cutting and pasting; nature-study; singing; colouring; clay-modelling; boat-sailing.

The co-education method has been adopted with entire success. It has been found to give variety and charm, has stimulated interest, helped to humanise the boys and taught them politeness, enabled the girls to meet the boys without excessive bashfulness on either side. There has never been any trouble about discipline

—the fear of being told that they would not be allowed to come again has acted as a strong deterrent against bad behaviour. At the close of the session the parents are invited to come and see what their children have learned to do, to their intense satisfaction and delight.

That the whole experiment has been a great success is proved by the fact that this year (1911) the average daily attendance has been 1050. Amongst the innovations of the year have been the introduction of morris—and maypole—dancing and model-yacht building.

Then there is the Invalid Children's School. This was started by Mrs. Ward in 1899. Nothing of the kind had ever before been attempted in any country—it was another of those pioneer works which our author seems particularly to have loved.

An ambulance carriage was especially constructed to convey from their homes to the School, and in charge of a duly qualified nurse, children suffering from heart, spinal, or hip trouble. Such children cannot, of course, receive much direct teaching, but they learn something, their interest in life is stimulated, and the mere change of scene, from the, too often, gloomy home, to the large, airy, bright rooms of the school, is of itself a stimulus and a potent aid towards better health.

London was already familiar with schools for mentally defective children, and at these schools a certain amount of provision had sometimes been made for the crippled,—but it was found to

be undesirable to mix the latter with the former. The wits of cripples are often very keen, and the harm done was sometimes greater than the benefit received.

The success of the Invalid Children's School was immediate, and led to important developments in all the big towns of the country—open-air schools are one of the off-shoots of the parent scheme.

In London the County Council has taken up the matter with a heartiness that one had hardly ventured to look for in a public body. A scheme of work has been drawn up, and passed by the Board of Education. Lists of invalid children are obtained from the various hospitals where such children are received, and, as soon as they are convalescent, the ambulance omnibus, with its uniformed nurse, calls twice daily to fetch and return the little patients.

The rooms of the school are furnished with low tables, arm-chairs with extending foot-rests, and special couches for spinal cases.

Dinner is provided for the children in the school, so that they may have only the two journeys, from and to their homes. In the summer months they are frequently taken out for the day into the country, where they receive short practical lessons in elementary botany, and nature-study.

This scheme and these methods have been copied and adopted throughout the country; in consequence much suffering has been alleviated and many lives have been brightened.

That this and other reforms should have resulted from the initiative of individuals is only typical of the country. As a nation we are not initiative. There is a general feeling against the use of public money for experimental purposes—especially in social matters.

Private people commence some philanthropic experiment, and, if successful, the Government sometimes steps in and takes it up. Even so important a thing as Education was started in this way (again the foreigner must stand aghast at our happy-go-lucky methods). First the Church established Church schools and the Non-conformists followed with the so-called "British" schools; then the Government stepped in with annual grants, demanding at the same time the right to examine and inspect the schools.

Then came the great movement led by Foster, and the birth of the School Board. Secondary and Higher Education have remained, until quite recently, in the hands of private individuals and charitable societies. Fortunately for England there are not wanting signs of an awakening to a sense of the national needs in this matter of Education, and the future is not entirely without hope.

POLITICS

An attempt is here being made to deal separately with questions of religion and of politics,

but not without some difficulty, since the two are closely allied to each other. For many men make a religion of their politics, and indeed every man who follows politics with a single purpose and a noble aim, does so with an ideal that is essentially religious.

Now the essence of politics, it will hardly be denied, is the use of the franchise, and the ethical element concerns the wrong and the right use of that power.

It is evident that the supreme object of the exercise of political power can never be the mere exaltation of a political party. It may indeed happen that the exaltation of a particular section of the political sentiment of the nation, as representing a definite and distinct school of thought, or some principle, may be necessary as a preliminary step towards the attainment of a supreme end; but that end itself it cannot be.

In order that such end may be duly attained, it must first be sought and recognised. Such knowledge of the end in view for every citizen is unmistakably laid down in the annals of our race—it is the national well-being, obtained through the well-being of the individual.

With this brief statement of the broad general principle of political action we may now proceed to the study of the effect of this principle as found in the works under our consideration.

And first it should be noted that our author's knowledge of the political matters which have

troubled the past two decades, and are still troubling us, is remarkable. This can hardly be better demonstrated than by a reference to her handling of the various and difficult problems that are from time to time attacked by Factory Acts and Sweated Labour Bills, and only one passage need be cited in evidence. In this passage "him" refers to Fontenoy, who, as leader of the Opposition, is engaged in attempting to wreck a Bill of this nature, introduced by Lord Maxwell, and instigated, doubtless, by the tireless enthusiasm of Marcella.

"For him the Bill fell into three parts. The first part, which was mainly confined to small amendments and extensions of former Acts, would be sharply criticised, but would probably pass without much change. The second part contained the famous clause by which it became penal to practise certain trades, such as tailoring, boot-finishing, and shirt-making, in a man's or woman's own home—in the same place, that is to say, as the worker uses for eating and sleeping. This clause, which represented the climax of a long series of restrictions upon the right of man to stitch even his own life away, still more upon his right to force his children or bribe his neighbour to a like waste of the nation's force, was by now stirring the industrial mind of England far and wide.

"On this vital clause, in Fontenoy's belief, the Government would go down. But if, by amazing

good fortune and good generalship, they should get through with it, then the fight would but rage the more fiercely round the last two sections of the Bill. The third section dealt with the hours of labour in the new workshops that were to be. For the first time it became directly penal for a man, as well as a woman, to work more than the accepted factory-day of ten and a half hours, with a few exceptions and exemptions in the matter of overtime. On this clause, if it were reached, the Socialist vote, were it given solidly for the Government, might, no doubt, pull them through. 'But if we have any luck—damn it! they won't get the chance!' Fontenoy would say, with that grim, sudden reddening which revealed from moment to moment the feverish tension of the man.

"In the last section of the Bill the Government, having made its revolution, looked round for a class on which to lay the burden of carrying it into action, and found it in the landlords. The landlords were to be the policemen of the new Act. To every owner of every tenement or other house in London, the Bill said: *You* are responsible. If, after a certain date, you allow certain trades to be carried on within your walls at all, even by the single man or the single woman working in their own room, penalty and punishment shall follow. Of this clause in the Bill Fontenoy could never speak with calmness. One might see his heart thumping in his breast as he

denounced it. At bottom it was to him the last and vilest step in a long and slanderous campaign against the class to which he belonged—against property—against the existing social order." [1]

This masterly exposition of the difficulties attending all Labour legislation could only have been written by one who had a thorough grasp of the subject, and, reading between the lines, it is pretty evident where her sympathies lie.

Now there exists in London—with branches in all the large towns, at each of the Universities, and in two of the Colonies, namely, Canada and New Zealand—a certain Society called Fabian,[2] the moving spirit of which is George Bernard Shaw, nobly backed, be it said, by that indefatigable couple, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb. This Society has been engaged in the work of propaganda for the past twenty-nine years—a work conducted by means of public meetings, and, still more, by the issue of political pamphlets. A glance through the titles of these pamphlets will reveal the fact that they deal very largely with just the difficulties that Mrs. Ward's heroine Marcella was engaged in combating, *e.g.* :—

A Word of Remembrance to the Rich, Why are the Many Poor? The Working Life of

[1] *Sir George Tressady* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1910), pp. 280, 281.

[2] This society is repeatedly referred to in *Marcella* and *Sir George Tressady* under the name of "Venturist."

Women, The Endowment of Motherhood, Child Labour under Capitalism, The Village and the Landlord, The Secret of Rural Depopulation, Parish and District Councils, The Tenant's Sanitary Catechism, The Humanising of the Poor Law, The Wastage of Child Life, The Common-sense of Municipal Trading, Home-work and Sweating, and State Arbitration and the Living Wage.

These pamphlets are written by some of the most prominent and most daring thinkers of the age—men like Shaw, Webb, Sir Oliver Lodge, H. G. Wells, Dr. Clifford and Edward Carpenter,—hence they have made a deep impression on the times; for instance, it has been said (and with a great deal of truth) that the epoch-making Budget of 1909 was first outlined in the offices of the Fabian Society.[1]

It would, perhaps, have been hardly worth while to refer to this association and its work, except for one very significant fact; that although it is a Collectivist Society, it consists almost exclusively of people of the middle classes—many of its members being quite wealthy. These are the very people who were roused by the horrible state of the poor in our villages, that was exposed

[1] *Vide* Fabian Tract, No. 135, "Paupers and Old-Age Pensions."

by Mrs. Ward in *Robert Elsmere* and *Marcella*, and of the sweating in our towns, so ably dealt with in *Sir George Tressady*. It was not the working classes themselves who were roused, for they did not then read the books [1]—it was the middle classes whose sympathies were touched, and it cannot be doubted that this flood of sympathy sent hundreds into the ranks of the Fabian Socialists, who, with a fresh influx of financial and moral support, were thus able to redouble their activities and so to influence the great army of "wobblers" in favour of social reform. Now part of the policy, or perhaps one ought to say, of the tactics, of the Fabian Society was to permeate the Liberal Party with their opinions on social problems.

This is probably one of the astutest moves that any association has ever perpetrated, and speaks volumes for the sagacity of its leaders, from whom, indeed, in view of their status in the intellectual world, we should hardly expect less. The Fabian committee saw, and frankly recognised, that the word Socialist is anathema in England—it carries a stigma in every syllable—and in the public mind it is inevitably and indelibly connected with street-corner orators and out-of-work agitators. No political party calling itself "Socialist" has ever had the semblance of a chance of success at the polls—only two persons labelling themselves

[1] They have read them since, in the Public Libraries, and in cheap editions, in enormous numbers.

uncompromisingly "Socialist" have ever been elected to Parliament.[1]

The Fabian leaders, therefore, hit upon the ingenious idea of calling themselves by the euphemistic term "Fabian" and of *working through the Liberals.* We have the story of how it was done in the words of the Fabian generalissimo himself:—"We now adopted a policy which snapped the last tie between our methods and the sectarianism of the Federation.[2] We urged our members to join the Liberal and Radical Associations of their districts, or, if they preferred it, the Conservative Associations. We told them to become members of the nearest Radical Club and Co-operative Store, and to get delegated to the Metropolitan Radical Federation and the Liberal and Radical Union if possible. On these bodies we made speeches and moved resolutions, or, better still, got the parliamentary candidate for the constituency to move them, and secured reports and encouraging little articles for him in the *Star.* We permeated the party organisations, and pulled all the wires we could lay our hands on, with our utmost adroitness and energy; and we succeeded so far that in 1888 we gained the solid advantage of a Progressive majority, full of ideas that would never have come into their heads had not the Fabian put them there, on the

[1] George Lansbury, M.P. for Bow and Bromley, and Victor Grayson, ex-M.P. for Colne Valley.

[2] *i.e.* of the Social Democratic Federation.

first London County Council. The generalship of this movement was undertaken chiefly by Sidney Webb, who played such bewildering conjuring tricks with the Liberal thimbles and the Fabian peas, that, to this day, both the Liberals and the Sectarian Socialists stand aghast at him. It was exciting whilst it lasted, all this 'permeation of the Liberal party,' as it was called; and no person with the smallest political intelligence is likely to deny that it made a foothold for us in the press, and pushed forward Socialism in municipal politics to an extent which can only be appreciated by those who remember how things stood before our campaign. When we published *Fabian Essays* at the end of 1889, having ventured, with great misgiving, on a subscription edition of a thousand, it went off like smoke; and our cheap edition brought up the circulation to about twenty thousand. In the meantime we had been cramming the public with information in tracts, on the model of our earliest financial success in that department, namely, *Facts for Socialists*, the first edition of which actually brought us a profit—the only instance of the kind then known. In short, the years 1888, 1889, 1890, saw a Fabian boom, the reverberation of which in the provinces at last produced the local Fabian societies which are represented here to-night." [1]

[1] George Bernard Shaw. *The Fabian Society: its Early History* (published by the Society, London, 1901), pp. 18, 19.

It is all very well for Shaw to say "The generalship of this movement was undertaken chiefly by Sidney Webb"; but we doubt not it was his own subtle brain that devised the scheme, and it was the glamour of his own great name that pressed it through to success. But note, if you please, the dates of the "Fabian boom,"—1888, 1889, 1890. *Robert Elsmere* appeared in 1888—was reviewed at length by no less a person than Gladstone himself in the *Nineteenth Century* in 1889, and was promptly bought in thousands and read by tens of thousands of the thinking public of the upper and lower middle classes. If there be no connection between these two movements, the coincidence becomes extraordinary.

Shaw chortles (if one may take the liberty of using a word of dubious etymology, and of no literary value unless it be a certain onomatopœic expressiveness) over the success of his scheme, and describes his methods as "Fabian tactics."

What, it may be wondered, would Quintus Fabius Maximus Verrucosus have thought of this stratagem? It seems to partake rather the dexterity of Hannibal, who, it will be remembered, when the "Cunctator" closed the passes of the Apennines against him, still managed—by an ingenuity that was truly Shavian—to escape.[1]

It would indeed be interesting to know if it ever occurred to Bernard Shaw to thank Mrs. Humphry Ward for having sown the seeds of

[1] *Vide* Titus Livius, *De Bello Punico II.*

sympathy and so prepared the land for the harvest he is so proud to reap.

No. 145 of the "Fabian Tracts" is *The Case for School Nurseries.* This was directly inspired by Mrs. Ward's experimental initiative at the Passmore Edwards Settlement Vacation School, which has been described elsewhere (p. 144). Tract No. 135, *Paupers and Old-Age Pensions,* by Sidney Webb, has had the flattering result of inducing the Government to actually pass an Old-Age Pensions Bill (in 1909). That no political party offered any serious opposition to the passing of this Bill must be accepted as evidence of the spread of benevolent ideals.

That Mrs. Ward herself has little or no leaning towards Socialism, whether in the form of Fabianism or in any other form, is made abundantly clear :—

"To Hallin the social life, the community, was everything; yet to be a 'Socialist' seemed to him more and more to be a traitor. He would have built his state on the purified will of the individual man, and could conceive no other foundation for a state worth having. But for the purification there must be effort, and for effort there must be freedom. Socialism, as he read it, despised and decried freedom, and placed the good man wholly in external conditions. It was aiming at a state of things under which the joys and pains, the teaching and the risks of true possession, were to be for ever shut off from the

poor human will, which yet, according to him, could never do without them, if man was to be man." [1]

Here is a man who has succeeded in eliminating all self from his politics, a man who looks far ahead for the final solution, a man who has accomplished personal reform and who would have others do so in order that the perfect legislative enactment may follow.

A careful study of Mrs. Ward's work as a whole would appear to lead to the conclusion, however—it would make this work too bulky were any attempt made to develop the theory in detail—that it is not so much a distrust of Socialism (towards which in youth she seems to have had leanings) as a consideration for the possible coercion of minorities that has driven our author, in spite of certain well-marked Radical tendencies, into the camp of the Conservatives. For keen student of politics that she is, she can hardly have failed to read that luminous tirade against the tyranny of majorities, entitled *Man versus the State.* In this work, Herbert Spencer takes as his text "The great political superstition of the present, is the divine right of parliaments," and in his deliberate philosophic manner he proceeds to crush the superstition.

Mrs. Ward, whose mind is phenomenally clear of superstition in any shape or form, has evidently no place for this particular form of it;

[1] *Marcella*, p. 423.

and if this solution is not correct, it can only be regarded as a curious fact, and one that psychologists may well ponder, that Mrs. Ward has joined the party opposed to that which is now attempting to carry out some of her own earlier aims of betterment.

Having, however, thrown in her lot with the Conservative party, it is characteristic of Mrs. Ward that she has put her whole soul into the cause—has become party pamphleteer, lecturer and canvasser.

In *Letters to my Neighbours on the Present Election*,[1] we find the same firm grip of a difficult political situation as was shown in *Marcella* and *Sir George Tressady*.

Here is all the old acumen that we have almost become accustomed to expect—all the deep insight into human affairs which has been marked from time to time during the progress of this dissertation.

And there is one extremely interesting little bit of self-revelation—a momentary drawing aside of the mental curtain, such as our author seldom permits :—

" Many years ago, when I first came to live in this country,[2] full of vague and, on the whole, hostile ideas about land and landlords, it fell to me in the course of writing *Marcella* to go through the Agricultural Reports of the great Labour

[1] (London : Smith, Elder & Co., 1910.)

[2] Mrs. Ward's childhood was spent in Tasmania.

Commission. I read all I could find in them—a strange mixed tale!—about the condition of the country labourer, his housing and wages. And nothing impressed me more—impressed a mind reluctant at that time to be impressed in any such way—than the gradual discovery that in the preceding forty years the housing of the labourer throughout England had been practically renewed and transformed, at great effort and cost, often at real personal sacrifice, by the landlord class. *Wherever*—that is to say—*landlords existed.* England, one saw, was divided between two types of rural dwelling—the 'open' village, without any resident landlords, where the houses belonged to small owners, and were the result of speculative building; and the 'close' village belonging to a landed estate, where the cottages had been rebuilt, or efficiently repaired, and were decently maintained.

"The 'open' village was still, as it is now, full of hovels. The 'close' village had been rebuilt, gardens and allotments had been provided. Of course there were exceptions—there always are. But broadly speaking a great and beneficent change was worked during these years over large tracts of England by the landlords of England; and it is the more creditable to them because it was done at a time of falling rents and agricultural depression."[1]

[1] *Letters to my Neighbours on the Present Election*, pp. 49, 50.

Here, then, we have explained to us what had always been somewhat inexplicable—namely, how it happened that Marcella, who spent quite a lot of her time in arraigning landlordism, came to marry a landlord. In the meantime, *i.e.* during Maxwell's courtship (or rather during the writing of it), Marcella (*i.e.* Mrs. Ward) had read the Agricultural Report of the Labour Commission, and had found the landlords responsible for a " beneficent " and " creditable " change !

SOCIAL LIFE

While giving us some remarkable pen-portraits of the various types of English men and women, while picturing for us in perspective the religious, social, and political movements of her time, Mrs. Ward has contributed to literature what is perhaps more valuable than any of these things—an accurate representation of the Society of her day. With the help of these works, students of the history of our race will for all time be able to get a glimpse of " the hidden resources and real forces of English Society " — to use her own phrase.

The Society of these romances is essentially feudal and aristocratic. There are lords and landlords and squires still in possession of the rights and powers conferred on them by their position, and still exercising those rights over their tenants

and dependents. But our author is careful to show how such authority entails its corresponding responsibility in spite of opinions, religious and political. Her men of position are men who are faithful to their traditions, unchangeable in their ideas and their methods, believing themselves to be, and acting as, sole arbiters of the lives of those whom fate has placed in dependence upon them.

Their women too are deeply imbued with the same spirit. See how Mrs. Allison, in *Sir George Tressady*, with infinite care trains her son always with a view to the duties which will fall to his lot as the owner of vast estates; how she herself, during the boy's minority, lives in the ancestral manor, reigning like a petty queen amongst her people, beloved and revered by all.

In Sir George himself we have the type of aristocrat who has been touched with the spirit of the great democratic movement. He recognises indeed the importance and the usefulness of the part in life he is called upon to play, but the part has lost some of its ancient glamour, has grown just a little irksome. Thus he becomes a prey to the feeling that there is a constant discord between the little world he governs, with its semi-feudal customs and its out-of-date traditions, and the great world outside—the world of thought, and action, and movement. He is thus able to admit that the secretary of a trade union, though probably a man of humble birth, is a more important

person than himself, by reason of his larger field of work.

Jacob Delafield, in *Lady Rose's Daughter*, has his youth overshadowed by the possible inheritance of a dukedom, with its heavy responsibilities; and when the great position falls to his lot he hesitates to accept it, and only consents in the end to do so because he is urged thereto by the strength of his love for Julie, and his wish to have her with him in the task which destiny has thrust upon them. For they *have* a task these high-born folk, to accomplish which they have acquired, through the ages, habits of self-restraint and of dignity which have had a deep effect on the moral life of the nation.

Whilst giving us a brilliant description of the outer phases of this Society, its way of life, its point of view, its conversation, Mrs. Ward has not hesitated to go deeper and to show us its organisation and its foundations. Of these latter she would appear to consider discipline as one of its chief virtues, backed by that energy, organised and traditional, which goes to the making of the perfect English gentleman. This type, she shows us, is the natural product of a Society which governs itself, and yet is governed by its aristocrats—that is to say, the people, having full freedom of election, choose aristocrats to represent them rather than men of their own class, whom they don't always trust. Hence we get a homogeneous governing class, working in harmony with the

governed—except for the occasional acrimony of party strife.

Following the lines of the old phrase "nobility, clergy, and gentry," Mrs. Ward's picture of the governing classes would include the incumbent of the parish. Thus Elsmere is no sooner settled in Murewell than he takes charge of the affairs of *his people*; he attempts, by all the means within his power, to create a soil more favourable to the growth of the human plant; he founds and manages clubs for the girls and the boys; he runs both a natural history and a choral society; he is actively interested in the sanitation and the health of the parish, even to the extent of giving, during a time of stress, personal assistance to the village doctor. These people are "his people"; so, while loving them as their spiritual father, he rules them paternally for their own good, for they are his children.

In Marcella we have pictured for us another type of the governing class. Her father being cynical and indifferent, she takes upon herself the care of his tenants; she essays to better their lot by founding a straw-plaiting industry, and makes the affairs of each needy household her special care. Later on, when, as Lady Maxwell, she has more power and more experience, she is able to do more for those who are her dependents, "her people." She gives up the old manor house of her family to be used as a club for the young men of the neighbourhood, she raises the wages

of the agricultural labourers on the Maxwell estate, and when her husband is made a Cabinet Minister she goes and lives among the poor of London so as to be better able to understand their needs and their ambitions :—

"Frankly, these five months were among the happiest of her life. She and Maxwell were constantly together, from morning till night, doing the things that were congenial to them. They went in and out of every factory and workshop in which certain trades were practised, within a three-mile radius; they became the intimate friends of every factory inspector and every trade-union official in the place. Luckily, Maxwell's shyness—at least in Mile End—was not of the sort that can readily be mistaken for a haughty mind. He was always ready to be informed; his diffident kindness asked to be set at ease; while in any real ardour of debate his trained capacity and his stores of knowledge would put even the expert on his mettle."[1]

Lord Maxwell himself is a very high type of the "governing class"—an economist with a broad vision; in fact, a statesman. His view of the social conditions of his time is :—

"that the enormous industrial development of the past century has shown us the forces at work in the evolution of human societies on a gigantic scale, and by thus magnifying them has

[1] *Sir George Tressady* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1909), p. 127.

given us a new understanding of them. The vast extension of the individual will and power which science has brought to humanity during the last hundred years was always present to him as food for the natural exultation—a kind of pledge of the boundless prospects of the race." [1] But on the other hand he fully realises "the struggle of Society brought face to face with this huge increment of the individual power, forced to deal with it for its own higher and mysterious ends, to moralise and socialise it lest it should destroy itself and the State together; the slow steps by which the modern community has succeeded in asserting itself against the individual, in protecting the weak from his weakness, the poor from his poverty, in defending the woman and the child from the fierce claims of capital, in forcing upon trade after trade the axiom that no man may lawfully build his wealth upon the exhaustion and degradation of his fellows." [2]

Maxwell sees that the State must dominate these somewhat excessive individual forces, against which there is abroad a spirit tending to protect itself by means of class struggles, trades unions, and strikes. But neither he nor Marcella—in spite of the latter's earlier leanings in that direction—have any delusions on the question of Socialism:—

"Neither had the smallest belief that any of

[1] *Sir George Tressady*, p. 126.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 124.

the great civilised communities would ever see the State the sole landlord and the sole capitalist ; or that Collectivism as a system has, or deserves to have, any serious prospects in the world. To both, possession—private and personal possession —from the child's first toy, or the tiny garden where it sows its passionately watched seeds, to the great business of the great estate, is one of the first and chiefest elements of human training, not to be escaped by human effort, or only at such a cost of impoverishment and disaster that mankind would but take the step—supposing it conceivable that it should take it—to retrace it instantly." [1]

No doubt Mrs. Ward would wish to show us that Marcella's life as a nurse in London, where she was brought into contact with the working classes and the realities of their lives, changed completely these earlier ideas of hers.

" ' If I were a thoroughgoing Socialist,' she says to Frank Leven, a young landlord who is talking of selling his land and going to Canada, ' I should say to you, Go ! The sooner you throw off all ties to your property, the sooner you prove to the world that you and your class are mere useless parasites, the sooner we shall be rid of you. But unfortunately *I* am not such a good Socialist as that. I waver—I am not sure of what I wish. But one thing I *am* sure of, that unless people like you are going to treat their lives as a pro-

[1] *Sir George Tressady*, p. 123.

fession, to take their calling seriously, there are no more superfluous drones, no more idle plunderers than you, in all civilised society!' "[1]

To Anthony Craven, a fellow-member of the Socialist or "Venturist" Society to which she had once belonged, she is even more explicit, and we can hardly doubt that the thoughts are Mrs. Ward's own :—

"'No,' says Marcella, 'so far as Socialism means a political system—the trampling out of private enterprise and competition, and all the rest of it—I find myself slipping away from it more and more. No; as I go about among these wage-earners, the emphasis—do what I will—comes to lie less and less on possession, more and more on character. I go to two tenements in the same building. One is hell—the other heaven. Why? Both, so far as I can see, might have a decent and pleasant life of it. Both belong to well-paid artisans with equal opportunities. But one is a man; the other, with all his belongings, will soon be a vagabond. That is not all, I know—oh, don't trouble to tell me so!—but it is more than I thought. No; my sympathies in this district where I work are not so much with the Socialists that I know here—saving your presence!—but with the people, for instance, that slave at Charity Organisation, and get all the abuse from all sides.'

"Anthony laughed scornfully.

"'It is always the way with a woman,' he said,

[1] *Marcella*, p. 556.

'she' invariably prefers the tinkers to the re-reformers.'

"'And as to your Socialism,' she went on, unheeding, the thought of many days finding defiant expression—'it seems to me like all other interesting and important things—destined to help something else! Christianity begins with the poor and division of goods—it becomes the great bulwark of property and the feudal state. The Crusades—they set out to recover the tomb of the Lord!—what they did was to increase trade and knowledge. And so with Socialism. It talks of a new order—what it *will* do is to help to make the old sound!'" [1]

Once again we have Mrs. Ward emphasising the importance of "character" on our national life, even in its lowest grades. She has observed, as others have done, that, unlike the French, who worship intellect, *we* attach the greater importance to character.

The English leader of men is not the man with the most brilliant intellect, but the man with the strongest character. Writing on this subject, M. André Chevrillon says:—

"C'est pour eux" (that is, the English) "la qualité morale par excellence, celle qui fait la valeur et la beauté de l'étoffe humaine, celle qu'ils révérent bien avant l'intelligence chez leurs grands hommes; c'est la fin suprême de l'éducation. Cette forme, qui s'appuie aux idées de Dieu et du

[1] *Marcella*, pp. 384, 385.

devoir, est anglaise, construite de toutes les certitudes anglaises, belle et régulière empreinte que l'enfant, jusque-là vague, reçoit à l'école, et qui, le marquant d'un trait spécifique, le détermine gentleman anglais. Suivant des contours exacts, —croyances, préjugés, idées traditionelles, habitudes et disciplines,—elle façonne à nouveau son être individuel, ou bien s'y superpose, effaçant et couvrant tout ce qui en lui est à part, impulsif, émotif, excentrique, hors du type régulier,—se manifestant au dehors par ce masque énergique, ces traits bien coupés, ces gestes sobres et tranquilles, ces airs d'impassibilité de certitude et de hauteur, qui hors d'Angleterre font le style et l'originalité d'un gentleman anglais, mais en Angleterre annoncent sa ressemblance avec tous les autres gentlemen anglais." [1]

And this "character" he has just previously defined as :—

"Forme précise, forte pour réprimer l'impulsif désordre du caprice, les brusques saccades des passions intérieures, pour résister aux chocs, suggestions, et tentations du dehors, pour durer et ne pas se détendre en découragement, ne pas s'avaguir en rêve, ne pas s'émitter en poussière de volonté." [2]

If we add tenacity of purpose, a strong sense of duty, and a keen appreciation of the importance

[1] *La Pensée de Ruskin* (Paris: Librarie Hachette et Cie, 1909), pp. 214, 215.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 213.

of moral dignity, we shall have a fairly accurate description of our national ideal.

People of this type move slowly; change is objectionable to them, their traditions are conservative, their instinct is to look askance at all innovations. In this Mrs. Ward sees the essentials, the foundations of the solidarity of the English race, its continuity and its steady, sober progress. She sees an England which lends herself only to the hand of the reformer who is careful to spoil nothing, who is willing to work in the same direction as Nature herself. Whatever crisis may arrive, the instinct of the nation may be trusted to see that its destinies are guided along the lines laid down by her ancient traditions.

But beyond the kingdom itself, England to-day is conscious of the Empire. The motherland sends out her sons to exploit and colonise her far-flung dominions, carrying with them the old traditions, it is true, but imbued with a new vigour and a younger outlook.

This is a phase of our history that has appealed strongly to Mrs. Humphry Ward, and in May and June 1908 she made a tour in Canada.

The result of that tour she has given us in a charming romance entitled *Canadian Born*. In it she has penetrated to the very soul of the British race, showing us its irresistible energy, its dominant force, its imperial instincts.

The hero, one George Anderson, is the very personification of that vigorous young colony,

embodying in himself its efforts and its aspirations.

In fine, almost dramatic, contrast Mrs. Ward has represented the luxury and refinement and traditions of the old country by three persons—Lady Merton, Philip Gaddesden, and Arthur Delaine.

Elizabeth Merton, the heroine of the story, early succumbs to the fascination of the new country, much to the disgust of Delaine, who is an enthusiast on the subjects of ancient Greece and Rome.

"'One hears,' she says, 'of how the young nations came down and peopled the Roman Empire. But that lasted so long. One person—with one life—could only see a bit of it. And here one sees it *all*—all, at once!—as a great march—the march of a new people to its home. Fifty years ago, wolves, and bears, and buffaloes,—twelve years ago even, the great movement had not begun—and now, every week, a new town!—the new nation spreading, spreading over the open land, irresistibly, silently: no one setting bounds to it!'" [1]

"Before this century is out," says an eminent Canadian, "we shall be a people of eighty millions, and within measurable time this plain of a thousand miles from here to the Rockies will be as thickly peopled as the plain of Lombardy." [2]

Then swiftly comes the poignant contrast:—

[1] *Canadian Born* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1910), p. 57.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 68.

"Delaine endured a wearisome half-hour. He got no speech with Elizabeth, and prize-cattle were his abomination. When the half-hour was done, he slipped away, unnoticed, from the party. He had marked a small lake or 'slough' at the rear of the house, with wide reed-beds and a clump of cotton-wood. He betook himself to the cotton-wood, took out his pocket Homer and a notebook, and fell to his task. He was in the thirteenth book:— *ὡς δ' ὅτ' ἀνὴρ δόρποιο λιλαίεται, ᾧ τε πανῆμαρ νειὸν ἀν' ἕλκητον βόε οἰνοπε πηκτὸν ἄροτρον.*"[1]

It is a fascinating study, this antithesis—on the one hand the strenuous new life, on the other the dilettante leisure of the old.

That Mrs. Ward herself was deeply impressed by what she saw we are not allowed to doubt:—

"I am suffering from a new kind of *folie des grandeurs*. The world has suddenly grown so big; everything in the human story—all its simple fundamental things at least—is writ so large here. Hope and ambition—love and courage—the man wrestling with the earth—the woman who bears and brings up children—it is as though I had never felt, never seen them before. They rise out of the dust and mist of our modern life—great shapes warm from the breast of nature—and I hold my breath. Behind them, for landscape, all the dumb age-long past of these plains and mountains; and in front, the future on the loom,

[1] *Canadian Born*, p. 73.

and the young radiant nation, shuttle in hand, moving to and from at her unfolding task ! " [1]

The voice is Lady Merton's, but the words and the spirit that inspires them are our author's. Only once does Elizabeth's zeal meet with a rebuff, and, characteristically, it is the hardship of woman's lot in these new conditions that calls a halt to her exuberance :—

" ' There are some ladies in the hotel, from British Columbia. They are in easy circumstances—and the daughter is dying of overwork ! The husband has a large fruit farm, but they can get no service ; the fruit rots on the ground ; and the two women are worn to death.'

" ' Aye,' said Anderson gravely. ' This country breeds life, but it also devours it.'

" ' I asked these two women—Englishwomen—if they wanted to go home, and give it up. They fell upon me with scorn.'

" ' And you ? '

" Elizabeth sighed.

" ' I admired them. But could I imitate them ? I thought of the house at home ; of the old servants ; how it runs on wheels ; how pretty and—and dignified it all is ; everybody at their post ; no drudgery, no disorder.'

" ' It is a dignity that costs you dear,' said Anderson, almost roughly, and with a change of countenance. ' You sacrifice to it things a thousand times more real, more human.' " [1]

[1] *Canadian Born*, p. 129. [2] *Ibid.* p. 203.

But Elizabeth herself is the daughter of a man who has made railways and history in Canada, so that she absorbs by instinct and revels in the sensation of immensity and of illimitable possibilities which this new land gives to all who come to it with the true receptive spirit.

It is fitting that in the end the daughter of the old country should give a child to the son of the new :—

" The pledge of a sympathy, a union, begun long before her marriage, in the depths of the spirit, when her heart first went out to Canada,—to the beauty of the Canadian land, and the freedom of the Canadian life." [1]

Summing up Mrs. Ward's picture of Society, we see that she believes in democracy, she realises that the future of England lies in that democracy, but on the other hand she appears to plead for the retention of the position of the aristocracy, because of its culture and its honourable traditions, which must, she thinks, have a refining and restraining influence during the forward march which she admits to be inevitable. She is keenly alive to the grandeur of that march, the vigour of the democratic colonies finds a responsive chord in her heart, yet all the while she is sensitive of the charm of antiquity and tradition. Her ideals and her hopes for this Society would appear to demand an expansive and a progressive mind that shall be free from any taint of destructive-

[1] *Canadian Born*, p. 346.

ness ; a mind that shall be prepared to discuss religious difficulties and differences only with a view to a better understanding of the essentials of religion ; that shall be capable of considering love as an elevating influence only to be enjoyed if and when any debasing element, any conceit of self, shall have been eradicated by discipline ; that shall give itself to the service of the community (whether it be in politics or in the broader field of social reform) only with the idea of amelioration as a means of consolidation. These, for her, are the fundamentals, the essentials, the only bases on which an imperial race can build up its destiny.

WOMAN

When we think of the number of women of the rebellious type whom Mrs. Ward has drawn, and drawn too with no small amount of sympathy and insight,. such as Marcella Boyce, Kitty Ashe, Laura Fountain, and Louie Grieve, we should almost expect to find her among the Feminists ; but she is not to be found in that camp.

Judging indeed from the first of her great heroines, our author would seem rather to favour the Ruskin model. Take, for instance, the following pronouncement on woman by the great Pre-Raphaelite, and let us consider how aptly it fits Catherine Elsmere :—

" We cannot determine what the queenly power

of woman should be, until we are agreed what their ordinary power should be. We cannot consider how education may fit them for any widely extending duty, until we are agreed what is their true constant duty. And there never was a time"—Ruskin is writing in 1865—"when wilder words were spoken, or more vain imagination permitted respecting this question—quite vital to all social happiness. The relations of the womanly to the manly nature, their different capacities of intellect or of virtue, seem never to have been yet estimated with entire consent. We hear of the 'mission' and of the 'rights' of Women, as if these could ever be separate from the mission and rights of Man—as if she and her lord were creatures of independent kind, and of irreconcilable claim. This, at least, is wrong. And not less wrong—perhaps even more foolishly wrong (for I will anticipate thus far what I hope to prove)—is the idea that woman is only the shadow and attendant image of her lord; owing him a thoughtless and servile obedience, and supported altogether in her weakness by the pre-eminence of his fortitude.

"This, I say, is the most foolish of all errors respecting her who was made to be the helpmate of man. As if he could be helped effectively by a shadow, or worthily by a slave!"[1]

In the picture which the author has drawn of

[1] *Sesame and Lilies* (London: George Allen, 1865), pp. 90, 91.

her, with infinite care and a great depth of sympathy, we see Catherine continually about her wifely duties, keeping always the harmonious peace and order of his household, and ably supplementing all his work in the parish; visiting the sick, helping the needy, soothing the last days of the aged, cheering the overburdened mothers of the poor in their dreary round of daily toil;—in short, the perfect help-mate.

Even when Elsmere has abandoned all that dogma which Catherine holds so dear, and her soul is bruised and bitter, she still plays her wifely part bravely:

"She would smile and ask questions, and admire, and then when Robert had gone she would move slowly to the window and look out at the great mass of the British Museum, frowning beyond the little dingy strip of garden, with a sick longing in her heart for the Murewell cornfield, the wood-path, the village, the free air-bathed spaces of heath and common. Oh! this huge London, with its unfathomable poverty and its heartless wealth—how it oppressed and bewildered her! Its mere grime and squalor, its murky poisoned atmosphere, were a perpetual trial to the countrywoman brought up amid the dash of mountain streams and the scents of mountain pastures. She drooped physically for a time, as did the child." [1]

[1] *Robert Elsmere* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1910), p. 392.

One's mind is driven back irresistibly to that great womanly sacrifice which Euripides has handed down through the ages for the admiration of all time.

γυνή τ' ἀρίστη τῶν ὑφ' ἡλιῷ μακρῷ says the Choros, referring, of course, to Alcestis, but her maid, it will be remembered, is not satisfied :—

πῶς δ' οὐκ ἀρίστη; τίς δ' ἐναντιώσεται; τί χρὴ γενέσθαι τὴν ὑπερβεβλημένην γυναῖκα; πῶς δ' ἂν μᾶλλον ἐνδείξαιτό τις πόσιν προτιμῶσ' ἢ θελοῦ' ὑπερθανεῖν; she asks, in a burst of enthusiasm for the kind considerate mistress she is about to lose. We can imagine Catherine producing just such devotion among those who were brought into daily contact with her.

How vast the difference between these beautiful calm souls and that other type of woman whom Mrs. Ward has painted for us in such vivid colours in *The Marriage of William Ashe!* Although the difference is so great, the author's sympathy with the "Catherine" type is so keen, yet she seems to have positively gloried in filling in the minutest shades of light and dark in that wonderful piece of psychology "Lady Kitty"—the wayward, frivolous, irresponsible wife of William Ashe. What could be more poignant, for instance, than this ?—

"Kitty was to have gone to a ball. She countermanded her maid's preparations, and sent the

[1] *Alcestis*, Scene II., vv. 153–157 (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

maid to bed. In due time all the servants went to bed, the front door being left on the latch, as usual, for Ashe's late return. About midnight a little figure slipt into the child's nursery. The nurse was fast asleep. Kitty sat beside the child, motionless, for an hour, and when Ashe let himself into the house about two o'clock he heard a little rustle in the hall, and there stood Kitty, waiting for him.

"Kitty, what are you about?" he said in pretended amazement. But in reality he was not astonished at all. His life for months past had been pitched in a key of extravagance and tumult. He had been practically certain that he should find Kitty in the hall.

With great tenderness he half led, half carried her upstairs. She clung to him passionately as, before dinner, she had repulsed him. When they reached their room the tired man, dropping with sleep after a parliamentary wrestle, in which every faculty had been taxed to the uttermost, took his wife in his arms, and there Kitty sobbed and talked herself into a peace of complete exhaustion. In this state she was one of the most exquisite of human beings, with words, tone, and gestures of a heavenly softness and languor. The evil spirit went out of her, and she was all ethereal tenderness, sadness and remorse. For more than two years scenes like this had, in Ashe's case, melted into final delight and intoxication,

which more than effaced the memory of what had gone before." [1]

A true artistry, surely, is marked by the writer's versatility—she draws with equal facility, with equal vigour of outline and depth of conviction, the calm and helpful Catherine, the enthusiastic and forceful Marcella, the winsome wayward Kitty, the headstrong and reckless Hester, the *rusée* superficial Letty, the heroic Miss Bretherton, the saintly Dora, and the hysterical Louie.

But perhaps of all Mrs. Ward's heroines the one who most resembles the woman of the moment is Laura Fountain. Our author devotes the greater part of a whole romance (*Helbeck of Bannisdale*) to the study of this character, but Helbeck himself sums it up in a line. "How she loathes all that we love," he says,—"humility, patience, obedience. She would sooner die than obey." There you have the keynote of a most complex and fascinating personality. Not humility, but a healthy robust pride, pride in her absolute mental freedom from all suspicion of bigotry and superstition. Not patience, but impulsiveness—eager always to follow immediately the dictates of an impulse and a conscience that she knew to be pure and single of purpose. Not obedient to anyone or anything that she did not love or understand, but loyal and true even, as the story shows, unto death, to those who have loved and understood her. Mrs. Ward says of her :—

[1] *The Marriage of William Ashe*, pp. 135, 136.

" She was a creature of excess ; of poignant and indelible impressions. . . . She had been bred in that strong sense of personal dignity which in all ages has been the alternative to the abasements and humiliations of religion. And with that sense of dignity went reserve—the intimate conviction that no feeling which is talked about and measured by other people is worth a rush." [1]

Nothing is further removed from a selfish and rebellious individualism than this sense of personal dignity and this respect for one's personality ; we find them both at the source of those instincts and principles which govern the life of society and of the nation.

It is characteristic of Mrs. Ward that she leaves severely alone that unwholesome type of woman who not only perverts the affections of her husband so as to make him her slave, but who positively glories in the humiliating position thus created. Sudermann has painted with intense realism the type of woman referred to, in the character of Felicitas, of whom her husband is made to say :—

" Ich erkaufe mir gewissermassen das Recht, als ihr Mann neben ihr her zu leben, indem ich ihr alle nur erdenkliche Freiheit lasse. . . . Sie liebt Männergesellschaft—gut—ich lasse ruhig zu, dass unsre jungen Herren aus der ganzen Gegend kommen, um ihr den Hof zu machen, und habe meine stille Freude daran, wenn sir mir die Thor-

[1] *Helbeck of Bannisdale* (London : Smith, Elder & Co., 1903), pp. 318, 319.

heiten, die die Leute um ihretwillen begehen, in ihrer lieblichen, verschämten Art selber eingesteht. . . . Ich lasse ihrer Phantasie ruhig die Zügel schiessen, ob sie sich nun im Parke künstliche Ruinen aufbaut,—oder nachts zu Pferde uber die Wiesen jagt—oder im Mondschein über den Strom schwimmt—oder bei Lampenlicht in Bette liegt—meinetwegen. Sie mag treiben, was sie will, und der Klatsch wagt sich auch nicht an sie heran, denn sie ist meine Frau. . . . Ich nehm' sie wie eine schöne Tropenblume, die meiner Pflege anvertraut ist. Deren fremdartigen Liebreiz muss man auch bedingungslos anbeten, selbst wenn man die Gesetze ihres Seins und Wachsens nicht versteht." [1]

One can well imagine the scorn with which Mrs. Ward would handle such a character, if indeed she could ever be supposed to so far demean her art as to touch this ultramodern, hedonist, neurotic type. No, the creator of Marcella and Catherine is to be congratulated on the fact that there is no suspicion of the "Tropenblume" about any of her heroines. Even Kitty, who is the nearest approach to this type (though far enough removed from it) has her whims and fancies easily forgiven, for she possesses what no woman of the Felicitas brand can ever possess, namely, the fascinating quality of winsomeness.

[1] *Es War* (Stuttgart und Berlin, 1094, Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger), p. 17.

Of no Felicitas could be written :—

" Kitty returned, her breath hurried, her eyes wavering. She looked doubtfully at Ashe—then her eyes sparkled—as she understood. She dropped on her knees beside him, kissing the sleeve of his coat, against which her cheek was pressed,—in a passion of repentance." [1]

Kitty is perhaps capable of allowing " jungen Herren kommen um ihr den Hof zu machen," but she could hardly be guilty of the folly and cruelty of " in ihrer lieblichen, verschämten Art selber eingestehen."

Kitty, although she allows herself to be attracted by the passion of Cliffe, never really yields to it, as did Felicitas to that of Leo Sellenthin, and even when she was tempted to submit, it was when she was no longer under her husband's roof. Such an enormity as that of Felicitas is in fact outside the range of her psychological capacity.

In *Sir George Tressady* Mrs. Ward gives us two pictures of poignant antagonism—Letty, the typical parasite, getting all she can, and giving as little as possible in return, and Marcella, the ideal wife and mother, her husband's constant helpmate, his strongest political supporter, the efficient controller of his household, yet finding time withal to minister to the wants of—to gain and retain the affection of—her son. The unique

[1] *The Marriage of William Ashe* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1905), p. 257.

position of Marcella does indeed raise for a moment the eternal question :—

"Meanwhile, for the initiated, the situation possessed one or two points of special interest. Lady Maxwell, indeed, was by this time scarcely less of a political force than her husband. Was her position an illustration of some new power in women's hands, or was it merely an example of something as well known to Pharaoh as to the nineteenth century—the ability of any woman with a certain physique to get her way? That this particular woman's way happened to be also her husband's way made the case less interesting for some observers. On the other hand, her obvious wifely devotion attracted simple souls to whom the meddling of women in politics would have been nothing but repellent had it not been recommended to them by the facts that Marcella Maxwell was held to be good as well as beautiful, that she loved her husband, and was the excellent mother of a fine son." [1]

Marcella, in fact, has some of the spirit of the feminist which leaks out now and then under provocation. On the occasion, for instance, when she had been struck on the temple by a stone thrown, after a political meeting, and one of her friends is offering condolences, she flashes out :—

"Why should there be any more fuss about a

[1] *Sir George Tressady* (London: T. Nelson & Sons, 1910), p. 87.

woman's being struck than a man? We don't want any of this extra pity and talk." [1]

But the true woman-rebel wouldn't at all agree with the following:—

"The women who matter just now—and you women are getting a terrible amount of influence—more than you've had any time this half-century—are the women who sit at home in their drawing-rooms, wear beautiful gowns, and attract the men who are governing the country to come and see them." [2]

The fact is that in Great Britain feminist aspirations have never found a congenial soil—the whole conservative instinct of the country is opposed to the movement. From time to time, however, this attitude has been shaken by the speeches or the writings of some more than usually vigorous pioneer, and latterly the militant societies have forced themselves into notice by means of their daring tactics.

In practice, however, the wide range of reform and rebellion which is implied in the term feminism has been narrowed down to certain sectional agitations mainly confined to the political world.

Marriage reform, it is true, is vaguely demanded by all—but when particular remedies are suggested there is immediate discord: one section wants the marriage bond to bind more firmly; another

[1] *Sir George Tressady*, p. 349.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 360 (Lord Naseby *loquitur*).

seeks the loosening of the bond; a third asks for no bond at all.

By such examples women have made it clear that they have not yet made up their minds whether they desire equality or privilege; whether they want economic independence, or a strengthening of the bonds of dependence; whether they claim liberty as human beings, or protection and endowment as mothers; whether they wish to stereotype existing differentiation between men and women by making such differentiation permanently of greater advantage to women, or to establish real sex equality with its burdens as well as its advantages.

A question of supreme interest to students of Mrs. Ward's work is, what is *her* attitude in this matter?

It is, we believe, one of the axioms of feminism that whether "married or not, a woman is bound to maintain, like a sacred fire, her own individuality."

Now this idea is found to dominate our author's whole conception of love and marriage. All her great heroines—Catherine Elsmere, Marcella, Kitty Ashe, Julie le Breton, Laura Fountain—love, and (in all cases except the last) marry without losing one atom of their individuality—not one of them sacrifices an iota of her independence.

One would suppose, therefore, that the feminist could claim Mrs. Ward as one of her champions.

But the facts belie the theory. On the contrary,

we find her one of the leading spirits on the other side. Speaking on the 21st July 1908 she said :—

" Women are ' not developed men but diverse,' and the more complex the development of any State the more diverse. Difference, not inferiority—it is on that we take our stand. The modern State depends for its very existence—and no juggling with facts can get rid of the truth—on the physical force of men, combined with the trained and specialised knowledge which men alone are able to get, because women, on whom the child-bearing and the child-rearing of the world rests, have no time and no opportunity to get it. The difference in these respects between even the educated man and the educated woman—exceptions apart—is evident to us all. Speaking generally, the man's mere daily life as breadwinner, as merchant, engineer, official, or manufacturer, gives him a practical training that is not open to the woman. The pursuit of advanced science, the constantly developing applications of science to industry and life, the great system of the world's commerce and finance, the fundamental activities of railways and shipping, the hard physical drudgery, in fact, of the world, day by day—not to speak of naval and military affairs, and of that diplomacy which protects us and our children from war—these are male, conceived and executed by men. The work of Parliament turns upon them, assumes them at every point.

There is a greatness in self-restraint as well as in self-assertion ; and to embarrass the difficult work of men, in matters where men's experience alone provides the materials for judgment, is not to help women. On the contrary. We are mothers, wives, and sisters of men, and we know that our interests are bound up with the best interest of men, and that to claim to do their work as well as our own is to injure both." [1]

This is the language of strong conviction, and on reflection these are exactly the sentiments that might have been expected of Mrs. Ward. The Arnold tradition alone—with its love of Culture and its instinctive dislike for anything in the least degree blatant or clamorous—would account for this attitude. And when we add to this her own position as a wife and mother, with her high ideals of duty and devotion and self-sacrifice, we wonder that it was possible for one moment to think otherwise.

Mrs. Ward is in fact a typical representative of the upper-middle and professional classes, with all the culture and refinement of those classes. And it is probably these very instincts which have caused her to shrink from the enfranchisement of women. The traditional attitude of the women of those classes is that it is better for a country as a whole that there should be a great body of educated opinion not pledged to support one or the other

[1] Speech published as a pamphlet by the Women's National Anti-Suffrage League, pp. 4, 5.

part in the State—free, in the non-possession of the vote, freely to criticise.

Such is probably Mrs. Ward's attitude, yet we find her saying, at a meeting of the Women's Local Government Society :—

"One of the most crying needs in England to-day is a larger supply of women on local governing bodies. We have to deal with all that grows most closely and naturally out of household life—women as well as men—provision of decent houses, and decent sanitation. We must endeavour, through health visitors and sanitary inspectors, to help people; to guard against the neglect of landlords or the carelessness of tenants."

Mrs. Ward proceeded to urge that a fixed number of places should be reserved on these bodies for women, and quoted the remark of Burke: "Good government involves social partnership, not only between those who are living, but with those who are dead and with those who are yet to be born."

"We only ask," she concluded, "for what is our right, and we ask it in no grasping or selfish spirit, but in the interest of the Fatherland itself."

Strong indeed must be the tradition which prevents a woman with such aims from taking what seems to be the logical step to secure the fulfilment of those aims, by means of the franchise.

That Mrs. Ward, however, is a true friend to her sex will not admit of the faintest doubt, as the following facts will show. She is strongly in favour of the Higher Education of Women. She was the

founder of a system of lectures for women — a movement which ultimately led to the establishment of the Colleges for Women at the University of Oxford, and as a member of the first Council of Somerville Hall she watched over, and helped forward, the growth of that pioneer College.

To have thus been instrumental in founding Colleges for Women at our great Universities is surely a thing of which any woman may be proud, for it cannot but be regarded as a great progressive step in the evolution of woman's destiny.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

It only remains for us briefly to sum up the evidence in favour of the propositions put forth herein, and, in order to do so concisely, let us endeavour to answer three questions :—

(A) Does Mrs. Ward's work give us a true picture of English life during the past two decades ?

(B) Is there a marked quickening of the national instinct for social reform ?

(C) Does the taint of bigotry and superstition tend to disappear ?

(A) In the first place, let us consider some of the types of men and women Mrs. Ward has drawn for us :—

Elsmere, the doubting clergyman, was a familiar figure during the decade 1890–1900. He exists to-day, some think in greater numbers, but the bases of his doubts have shifted, as our author has shown in Richard Meynell.

Catherine, the helpful wife, the vicar's right hand in parish affairs, can be met in almost every town and village throughout the country.

Marcella, the woman with an enthusiasm for reform, was not unknown in 1890, whilst in 1910 she was the cynosure of all our eyes.

Sir George Tressady, the landlord politician, is typical of a large percentage—albeit a diminishing percentage—of the Commons of these years; men steeped in a sense of duty both local and national.

David Grieve. Some forty exemplars of this type compose the Labour Party, and form the backbone of the trades-union movement.

Henry Wharton, the insincere politician, the place-seeker. He, alas! is ever with us.

Kitty Ashe, beautiful, wilful, passionate, disastrous. She indeed belongs to all lands, but especially to our own, with its wonderful admixture of temperaments, Saxon, Celtic, Gaelic, and Norman.

Julie le Breton, half French, half English, proud, haughty, self-conscious, reserved, disdainful, can we not meet her at any social gathering or political reception?

Alan Helbeck still keeps aflame the smouldering lamp of Catholicism in our rural districts, and by his dogged devotion helps to hold back the ever-encroaching wave of indifferentism.

Laura Fountain, self-reliant, determined, progressive, cultured, fills the women's colleges at our Universities, and is often to be found in the ranks of the Feminists.

George Anderson, the indomitable colonial, has

made our Colonies the wonder and the envy of the world.

These are portraits for which a thousand originals could be found without difficulty, for, combined, they make up a large majority of that section of society which Mrs. Ward has made her special study.

(B) When we come to the question of Social Reform we realise that it cannot be dealt with quite so summarily.

Picking up the thread of social and political history where it was left in the introductory chapter, the continued trend of collectivist legislation may be marked as follows :—

(*a*) *Extension of the idea and range of State protection of the worker's interests* as shown by the Workmen's Compensation Acts of 1897 and 1900, the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1895, the Sale of Food and Drugs Act of 1899.

(*b*) *The preference for collective action,* as in the various modern Arbitration Acts.

(*c*) *The equalisation of advantages,* as brought about by means of compulsory elementary education, employers' liability, municipal trading, the Pubic Health Acts, the better housing of the poor, the establishing of Garden Cities, the extension of free education from the Primary School to the University, University Extension Lectures (bringing the learning of the savants into the heart of the cities and towns, available to all); University Settlements (Toynbee Hall and Cambridge House)

planted in the centre of the slum districts, furnishing to the poverty-stricken masses the object-lesson of what a home might be made, and so tending to create a desire for betterment even among the most debased.

The creator of Robert Elsmere must have looked upon these developments with feelings of keen pleasure, for it is not given to all reformers to be able to see their cherished ideals gradually realise themselves, and from year to year develop even beyond the dreams of the dreamer. For it is probable that Garden Cities and municipal trams and washhouses go beyond the original scope of Mrs. Ward's ideal.

What, then, shall be said of the newest movements?—the feeding of school children, free medical and dental inspection? These things must surely rejoice her heart, for her work at the Passmore Edwards Settlement has shown how she cherishes the nation's young. And the end is not yet, for—

"The force of collectivism," says Professor Dicey, "is not spent; it is not, to all appearance, even on the decline. Public opinion is guided far less by the force of argument than by the stress of circumstances, and the circumstances which have favoured the growth of collectivism still continue in existence and exert their power over the beliefs and the feelings of the public. Laws, again, are among the most potent of the many causes which create legislative opinion; the

legislation of collectivism has continued now for some twenty-five or thirty years, and has itself contributed to produce the moral and intellectual atmosphere in which socialistic ideas flourish and abound. So true is this that modern individualists are themselves on some points socialists. The inner logic of events leads, then, to the extension and the development of legislation which bears the impress of collectivism." [1]

The Professor's "logic of events" as deduced in 1898 is borne out by the enactments of 1910 and 1911. The force of collectivism has succeeded in passing two Bills (Old-Age Pensions and National Insurance) of a distinctive socialist flavour, so that the force has proved to be far from spent. We may legitimately doubt if it is even yet spent, though it may probably with safety be estimated to be on the wane, for it is the usual, if not indeed the inevitable, concomitant of a socialist policy, to so increase the weight of taxation that the middle classes throw themselves more and more into the balance as against the working classes, and so a reaction is produced.

And to one attempting earnestly to take an aloof and philosophic view of these movements, it would appear that the key-note of the development is *service*. In Victorian days the benevolent were to a great extent content to dispense charity in kind—to salve their consciences with doles,

[1] *Law and Opinion* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1905), pp. 300, 301.

that cost no great effort or sacrifice. How different to-day! Behind all creeds and faiths when the veil of each particular ritual is removed, we can now detect an effort at least, at some sort of human service, allied with the worship of the Divine. It is now recognised that man needs more than the canons of morality for his soul's health; he needs the discipline of personal service, of giving, of sacrifice; he must realise that there is plenty of work still to do.

Witness the steady growth of the work—citing at random one case in evidence—of that modern Elsmere, the Rev. R. J. Campbell. His league, the Liberal League of Christianity (and the word "Liberal" here has, of course, no political signification, being used in its pure etymological sense of *liberalis*), has four leading principles, we are told, namely:—

1. The removal of the cause of destitution instead of attempting to alleviate its results.

2. All such help must come from people willing to give personal service.

3. All work to be in co-operation with the State officials.

4. Workers must be willing to train themselves for the work.

The third of these principles is indeed noteworthy, for it marks a new era in our national life, in that it should be *possible* for social workers to co-operate with the State—not seeking to supplant on the one hand, nor to impede on the

other; but wisely working together for the common good.

This is surely a great step forward, for it will hardly be questioned that the State when left to itself is apt to be rigid, inflexible, without the power of adapting itself to the circumstances of the individual.

Yet a public authority can provide efficient appliances and skilled human machinery—it is for the people themselves to supply the motive force and the humanising agency. Voluntary work in the field of social service, done from the highest motives, with sympathy and self-denial, and brought to bear in the public interest, must secure results that could never be obtained by any purely commercial, local or national authority.

The task of the twentieth century, as Frederic Harrison read it, and as we believe Mrs. Humphry Ward to have read it, is to "discipline the chaotic activity of the nineteenth." And it can only do this by becoming aware of the death-sentence to be passed on Western civilisation, if it neglects to organise a new social discipline, from which the taint of self-seeking, both national and individual, shall have been eliminated.

(C) The spirit of our times, unless we have grievously misunderstood its voice, calls aloud for the better establishment of idealised common-sense, for freedom of outlook in all the ways of thought, for the spread and growth of all that is antithetic to bigotry and superstition.

One thing that Mrs. Ward has consistently pleaded for, namely, greater freedom for the expression of religious and ethical ideas, has been achieved to the fullest degree. Prosecutions of clergymen for the preaching of heterodox beliefs are now unknown—every occupant of a pulpit puts his own construction on Biblical narrative without let or hindrance. The bigot has almost disappeared from among us.

We believe that an "Elsmere" or a "Meynell" incident would, in the super-free atmosphere of to-day, be a moral impossibility.

How the fetish of Sabbath observance has been slain is shown in Chapter IV., and it may be safely stated that the modern Sunday is practically free from superstition.

Farrar's *Eternal Hope* and Cox's *Salvâtor Mundi* have for ever laid the bogey of the Victorian "Hell," with its terrors of eternal burning and its utter elimination of Hope. Here Mrs. Ward's work has been only indirect, but Farrar and Cox might have sown in vain if the soil had not been prepared for the reception of their ideas by Matthew Arnold's destruction of the superstitious belief in the verbal inspiration and accuracy of the Scriptures, and Mrs. Ward's popularising of the same. It is, in fact, almost impossible to over-estimate the influence of this joint-work of uncle and niece; and it is hardly too much to say that it has completely changed our national psychosis. Witness, for instance, the

modern ethical attitude towards Contentment and Forgiveness.

In the golden days of Victoria, contentment with one's lot and forgiveness of our enemies were twin-virtues preached from the pulpits of all the Churches, and belauded from the editorial chairs of the great journals of the day; now, we hear of the "gospel of Discontent" as a sign of national vitality, and in the place of forgiveness an elaborate system of compensation for all kinds of wrongs has been instituted; such phrases as "he must bear the brunt" and "they must take the consequences" are found constantly in the mouths of the people. The offender of to-day must not look for forgiveness, he must "face the music"—to use a neologism coined to meet the mood of the moment.

Probably few would be surprised if a daring and original thinker like Bernard Shaw or G. K. Chesterton were to propound the theory that "Contentment and Forgiveness are the two greatest enemies of Humanity"; and either of them would doubtless be able to reinforce his proposition by means of many plausible arguments and some truth.

A little healthy discontent, it might be argued, would have prevented the mass of the poor from being so long content to live in insanitary hovels, and would thus have helped to stop physical deterioration; similarly, it might be argued that a too ready forgiveness of those who

injure us in word or deed, acts as a stimulant to further wrong-doing rather than as a deterrent, and is therefore anti-humanitarian. These ideas may or may not be new and they may or may not be true, the point is that their dissemination to-day would hardly call for remark, whereas twenty years ago they could only have caused consternation.

These, of course, are merely side issues, straws thrown into the stream to mark the drift of the waters, and if we have not entirely mistaken Mrs. Ward's tone of mind, it would seem certain that these changes are welcomed by her, for whatever she may be or may not be, there is no gainsaying one fact: she is a genuine whole-hearted lover of her kind.

Finally, let it be emphasised that our contention is not that Mrs. Ward's work is wholly and solely responsible for any improvement that may have been noted, in the national well-being, but that it has been throughout a potent factor in inciting the nation to insist on these improvements.[1]

It has not been possible to obtain publishers'

[1] It may not be amiss to state, however briefly, some of the chief influences which have tended in the same direction as, or in a similar direction to, that of Mrs. Humphry Ward.

Among these are :—

The writings of Bernard Shaw, which have given the death-blow to Victorian puritanism, and have done so much to open the eyes and broaden the view of the reading and thinking public.

figures in proof of the enormous extent to which the three chief works quoted herein have been read, but some indication of that extent can be found in the facts that (1) all three books passed through several editions at 6s.; (2) they were then issued at 2s. 6d., and in this "Cheap Popular" edition, one at any rate (*Marcella*) reached its eighteenth edition; (3) they have all three recently been again issued in a still cheaper edition at the trivial sum of 7d. per copy, so that these novels are now brought within the purview of even the poorest. The demand must be sustained, or there would have been no re-issues. It is impossible to estimate the number of people who have read Mrs. Ward's books, and it is equally impossible to find an English man or woman, of fair education, who has never read any of them. There is therefore no need for wonderment at the enormous influence they have exerted, it is the natural outcome of an immense success.

The Swing of the Political Pendulum, producing a strong progressive reaction after twenty years of undiluted Toryism.

The Spread of Education, creating a larger demand for the works of such thinkers and reformers as Mill, Ruskin, and Spencer.

The Reduction in the Hours of Labour, giving people leisure for the study of political and social problems.

The Advance of Socialistic Ideas, causing a vague fear in the minds of many, and so forcing them to consider, and attempt, means of allaying agitation among the working classes.

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